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SELECT VIEWS
OF
THE LIFE, REIGN, AND CHARACTER
OF
FREDERICK THE GREAT,
KING OF PRUSSIA.

Containing, besides many profound Remarks on the prominent Features of the Reign and Character of that unrivalled Sovereign, SERVING TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POSTHUMOUS WORKS, two very remarkable Letters of the Empress of Russia to the Author; a great Variety of Anecdotes, relating to eminent political and literary Characters of Great Britain, and other Countries; and also an authentic Exposition of the ORIGIN and TRUE CAUSES of the BRITISH ALLIANCE WITH PRUSSIA, &c. &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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OF THE NASSAU GUARDS.

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SELECT VIEWS, &c.

CHAP. XV.

On Frederick's Monopolies and Manufactories.

THE whole of Frederick's state economy, and especially his system of finance, is the point where the mighty Count Mirabeau thinks he has run down the great king in the midst of Berlin, to prove the superiority of his mind over that of Frederick, and convince the

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whole

whole world that, at the bottom, his soul was but little better than that of a block-head or a knave*.

Mirabeau's attempt to destroy every trace of wisdom and benevolence in Frederick's government, has been very properly compared to the endeavours of a serpent that breaks his teeth on a file. He scoffs at almost every one of Frederick's political principles, and slanders all his efforts to meliorate his dominions. In diametrical opposition to every true maxim of policy and finance; he presumes to establish in his work on the Prussian

* Letter presented to Frederick William the Second, now king of Prussia, the day of his accession to the throne, by Count Mirabeau.

Prussian monarchy, the following paradoxical tenets :

“ All endeavours to keep up a vast circulation of money within a country, are but foolish attempts.

“ Nothing must shackle the unlimited liberty of commerce and trade.

“ It is of great benefit to a country, to prohibit the peasants and farmers from carrying their corn to town, and to establish corn factors in the country, that have it in their power to sell as they please, and of course, to furnish the towns and all the country people, except husbandmen, whenever they find it convenient.

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“All care to the improvement and aggrandizement of towns, is a gross political mistake.

“Manufactories ought not to be encouraged and supported.

“To assist and raise a class of subjects, sunk into poverty and decay, is mere nonsense.

“A sovereign ought to set aside all excise, tolls, post, and salt duties: in short, every branch of public revenue, except the land tax, and the bare words Liberty! Liberty! will atone for them all.

“Every

“ Every subject must be at liberty to buy and sell where, and however he pleases, and the public revenue will be amply supplied.”

All this ridiculous stuff is preached by that mighty politician, in his work on the Prussian Monarchy, and *he* who is proved guilty of having grossly mistaken Frederick's financial operations, tramples on his wisest principles of government, and professes the most profound contempt of all those who applaud these principles. Under Count Mirabeau's administration, all the Prussian dominions must have been desolated by want and famine, and the direct impost with which this *enlightened* politician would oppress and

grind the Prussian subjects, could not have failed to consign to perdition all the country people, all industry and trade.

Frederick, it is well known, would not avail himself of every means to increase his revenue. "I love much better," said he, "to show my subjects how to keep their money, than to take it from them, and to give it back." He has declined adding millions to his revenue, for the sake of supporting and improving the manufactories in his dominions. He prohibited the importation of all foreign commodities, and freed from all duty, whatever was manufactured in his own country. That the increase of the public revenue ought to be
in

in the most exact proportion to the public weal, was a sacred axiom with him. Resolved to give his state a greater capacity for population, and his subjects certain means of subsistence, he did not sacrifice the wants of the greater part of them, to the incomparably smaller number of traders. He endeavoured to lift up and support the greatest part of his people by raising and countenancing manufactures in his kingdom, and did not mind the trader's and merchant's railing against his measures.

Conformably to this system, he advanced immense sums to founders and undertakers of new manufactories; and, if convinced of their success, he often forgave them the whole sum advanced.

This he did with the great silk manufactory of Gifard and Michelet; with the velvet manufactory of Moses Ryfs, and the silk manufactory of Bernard, whose book-keeper was the great philosopher Moses Mendelson, and who, besides many thousands in cash, got about twenty houses in Potsdam, for the workmen employed in this manufacture. General Lentulas procured the king a company of Swiss watchmakers, to whom he granted a loan of eighty thousand dollars, which, on the failure of the first arrivers, their successors not only retained, but got also forty thousand dollars more.

However, the monopolies are the first point, concerning which Frederick is generally misunderstood. Even Denina and Bushing, respecting this point, disapprove

approve his policy. The acute Mr. Denina here almost entirely takes the party of the adversaries of this great king: "Frederick," says he, "established (as is commonly reported) four hundred and twelve different monopolies, in his provinces. This is a great number, I confess, and it is strange indeed, that, nevertheless, the king was always speaking against monopolies, at table, and in his conversations. In all likelihood he did this, the better to learn all the objections against his system; or, he was of opinion, that his country was an exception to the general rule*."

B 5

On

* Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II. p. 434.

On the strength of Mirabeau's veracity, Mr. Denina supposes that Frederick, in his dominions, has granted four hundred and twelve monopolies; and all well-informed men have laughed at this supposition. Count Mirabeau mistakes for monopolies those prohibitions of foreign commodities, which ought to take place in every country, where manufactures and domestic trade are countenanced and promoted. Most certainly the king spoke often against monopolies, but that did not set him at contradiction with himself. He had full right, in many respects, to disapprove monopolies. The four hundred and twelve monopolies, with which Count Mirabeau upbraids him, were not exclusive rights of manufacturing and selling commodities,

modities, granted to one single person or one single company, and, of course, no monopolies of such exclusive rights; there existed, perhaps, not ten in the whole Prussian monarchy, during Frederick's reign.

No understanding man would reject all monopolies without restriction, when, in a country, a kind of manufactory is entirely wanting, and the sovereign wishes to establish it at his own expence, as an adventurer attempts it at his cost; there is not a more convenient way of obtaining the proposed end, than such an exclusive right *for a certain number of years*, at the expiration of which, all the subjects ought to have an equal right to establish such manufactories. If this

measure be enforced by prohibiting the importation of all foreign manufactures of the same sort; it cannot fail to be of the greatest benefit to a country, as it contains rather a monopoly for the *whole nation*, than for a single individual.

We must not wonder at Mr. Denina's being misled, with respect to this point of Frederick's policy. But very few are endowed with that inward strength with which a powerful mind stems the current of general errors, and disregards the consequences of the ensuing clamour, if any truth or other good can be wrought out by his endeavours.

“ If Frederick,” says Mr. Bushing,
 “ had not confined and impaired trade
 “ and

“ and commerce by monopolies and
 “ other measures, he would have been
 “ the idol of his people, for the many
 “ millions of money he spent in re-
 “ building and embellishing many a
 “ town in his dominions *.”

But the pragmatic Mr. Bushing, as little as the enthusiastic Mirabeau, perceived the difference between a monopoly and a prohibition of foreign commodities, which by no means cramps and obstructs the trade of a nation. If this was the effect of such prohibitions, England and Holland must have been reduced to indigence long ago. Count Mirabeau must have been a very superficial

* Character of Frederick the Second, page 20.

ficial observer of the internal policy of England and other trading countries, else he would have known that the flourishing condition of the Prussian dominions, so indubitable on the whole, rests on the very same basis as in these countries; and that by all means, manufactories and internal commerce are and must be the chief supports of any state and commonwealth. Frederic strictly followed their principle, from which no wise sovereign ever should swerve, that as little money as possible should be allowed to go out of the country. He knew very well, that many small parts form a great whole; and gave the most convincing proofs of his wisdom, by thinking even a political minimum never unworthy of his notice.

However,

However, Count Mirabeau, with his usual insolence and presumption, assures us that Frederick, who spent a vast deal of money in establishing manufactories, most cruelly harassed and oppressed industry and trade in his dominions. But is it not a glaring absurdity to bring this charge against a monarch, who cherished all domestic manufactories with the utmost care, gave to all their products an unbounded liberty, freed all raw materials, especially the wool, from all duties, and gave premiums for such inland manufactures as were sold at the fair of Franckfort? Of monopolies in that sense, wherein Bushing and Mirabeau take this word, there existed very few or none at all in the Prussian monarchy, during Frederic's reign. But the merchants every
where

where railed loud against his commercial restraints, and no where louder than in **Hamburgh**, where they found the most striking likeness between **Frederick** and **Lewis** the Eleventh of France, or **Frederick** and **Nero**.

A very respectable voice, in every country, is that of the merchant's. The universal complaints of so great, valuable, active, and speculative a body, against one single man, cannot fail of making the deepest impression; above all, when this individual adheres to his system, and is deaf to all these complaints. Every reproach, loud and often repeated, by a great number of people, strikes and commands attention. But the frequent and noisy utterance of such

a cen-

a censure is by no means a proof of its being well founded: therefore it will not be deemed improper to subject those complaints and censures to a strict scrutiny and disquisition.

“The sugar monopoly,” says Mr. Denina, “would be the most difficult to justify, if Frederick had not been obliged to grant it, in order to have a sugar manufactory in his own country*.”

Among all the exclusive rights of manufacturing and selling, bestowed by Frederick upon individuals, the sugar monopoly is that which may be most easily

* Essai sur la vie & le règne de Frederick II. page 437.

easily vindicated, and does the greatest credit to Frederick's deep insight into financial and commercial matters.

Some years before the seven years war, the first sugar manufactories were established in Berlin by Messrs. Splitgerbes; never any new establishment of Frederick the Great was more blamed than this; they cried every where: "In other cases the public revenue is at least increased by monopolies; but in this, the aggrandizement of the house of Splitgerbes can be the only effect; for the public will be obliged to pay for the sugar, which is now become of universal necessity, an enormous price." All the grocers, who till then had only been brokers or factors of the Ham-

Hamburgh merchants, dreaded a great deficiency in their trade.

The king, on the contrary, had the following reasons for granting this monopoly: by examining the tables of exports and imports, he found the sugar to be the chief money-drain of his country: the many thousand tons of foreign sugars imported yearly into the Prussian provinces, must appear incredible to every one who has not seen the toll-books and other papers that state and prove their numbers.

Prussia possessing no sugar islands, the raw material of this manufactory must always be purchased from foreigners; but the greatest part of the value of sugar

gar is paid for labour, as the refining of the raw material. By establishing sugar houses in his country, the king, of course, kept the price of this workmanship within his own dominions, and gave employment to many of his subjects:

The whole Prussian monarchy, and all neighbouring provinces, 'till then got their sugar from Hamburgh. Six hundred sugar-bakers, or refiners, lived there in ease and opulence, partly with Prussian money: very few other places in Europe brought this manufactory to such perfection as Hamburgh, and this was ascribed to a peculiar quality of the water: yet, the establishment of sugar-houses in Prussia, broke, in a short time, two hundred of these houses in Hamburgh,

burgh, and drew more than a thousand sugar-bakers, and other workmen employed in those manufactories, into the Prussian provinces. Protected and supported by Frederick, the Prussian sugar-works began to thrive. Their sugar prices were almost equal to those of Hamburgh, and much lower than those of the Austrian manufactories; and the excises they quarterly paid amounted to very great sums. How beneficial this monopoly was to the Prussian provinces, appear in the strongest light from the consequences of its abolition. In the very moment it was known that foreign treacle might be imported, the price of this necessary of the poor rose about thirty per cent. which was the natural effect of the great concourse of sugars in Hamburgh.

C H A P. XVI.

*On the French administration of the Excise and
Tolls in the Prussian Dominions.*

BOTH the excise and taxes were but very ill administered in Prussia, for want of the necessary inspection and controul; and, during the seven years war some Prussian financiers, conceiving that the Prussian monarchy was near its dissolution, embezzled and plundered the public revenue at will and pleasure. When this war was ended, the king, therefore, had nothing more at heart, than to restore order and regularity in his finances, and to encourage and support

support inland manufactories, which, he knew full well, could never prosper as long as the importation of foreign commodities was not entirely prohibited, and prevented by all possible means. This occasioned the French administration of the Prussian tolls and excise, or, as they called it, the *Régie*; the first mover and promoter of which, was the renowned author of the ingenious treatise, *De l'Esprit*.

Helvetius was certainly an able financier, but, at the same time, a gentleman of the most amiable disposition. Being one of the farmer-generals in France, he acquired an immense fortune: he dignified the possession of these riches by throwing off the yoke of French despotism,

tism, wrote his famous work, laughed at the wild clamour excited against it, and went to Potsdam. Adding to an extensive knowledge of the world all the refinement and subtlety of the most accomplished cruelties, he possessed, in an eminent degree, the talent of insinuating his opinions into the most prejudiced minds. He persuaded the king that his countrymen excelled all other nations in the knowledge and management of financial concerns, and, especially, in the art of preventing smuggling and contraband practices. Such adepts were the very men Frederick wanted. Helvetius, therefore, easily prevailed on him, that a number of French farmers-general should be entrusted with the care of regulating

gulating the Prussian finances, and new modelling them in their own way.

On his return to Paris, Helvetius chose forty farmers general, to reform the Prussian finances. They bound themselves only to insure the king his former revenue, and their emoluments should be, to share with him, on equal terms, the surplus produced by their operations. They did not give any other security but their word. They even stipulated in their contract, that in case of any mischance, they should be obliged to nothing more, than to account and make good the real revenue paid into their hands.

Three thousand French financiers now passed the Rhine. Manifold were their gradations, and ridiculous enough some of their titles, as *e. g.* strolling comptrollers, cellar-rats, &c.* Four, and afterwards five chiefs stood at the head of this financial army, called *Regisseurs*; all were subordinate to the farmers-general at Paris, and received instructions and orders from them. These farmers-general asked salaries for their deputies and servants in the Prussian dominions, whose number was so great, that but a part of them could be really employed. Frederick saw very soon what would be the consequence of this French intrusion, and demanded security from the Parisian farmers, which, however, they refused with the greatest arrogance.

* *Controlleurs ambulants; commis-rats de caver.*

Some Regisseurs remonstrated to them how wrong they were in denying this satisfaction, as the king insisted upon it, and the sum did not exceed the amount of that security, which every farmer-general was obliged to give to the French government. But Helvetius's haughty tribe returned them the following answer: "You are to know, that we have
 " established our company to introduce
 " some order into the finances of the
 " king of Prussia, and to give the necessary orders for that purpose, not to
 " receive them. This being the case, you
 " may tell the king, that, should this
 " not be to his liking, he is welcome to
 " take back his business, and we are
 " ready to annul our contract."

When this mandate of the French financeering tyrants was laid before the monarch, he could not refrain his indignation, and exclaimed, * “Why this areopage of scoundrels will give me orders?” He directly approved the annihilation of their contract, paid them all their expences according to their own arbitrary account, and took the Regisseurs, with their numerous retinue, into his service. He bade them now arrange his excise and tolls in their own way, gave them the title of Privy Counsellors of finance, and an annual salary of sixty thousand livres; however, under this proviso, that, by way of experiment, they should hold their places, if he

thought

* Comment cet areopage de gueux veut me donner des ordres?

thought proper, only for six years. After this time he dismissed four of them, and kept in his service but one, who had always given him great satisfaction, M. de la Haye de Launay.

Various are the reports and opinions respecting this French Regisseur. His countryman, Count Mirabeau, tells us :
 “ De Launay is less than nothing ;
 “ he has not even the least smattering
 “ in finance. His delivery is stammer-
 “ ing, and his ideas are confused. In
 “ short, this sorry financier and very
 “ vain man, would no where have been
 “ taken any notice of, but in this coun-
 “ try, where, in financial matters, he
 “ found neither a judge nor a rival*.

C 3. Frederick

* Histoire secrete de la cour de Berlin. Tom. II,
 pag. 285.

Frederick, the greatest financier in his dominions, knew, of course, much less than nothing; for he mistook a man who was less than nothing, and had not the least superficial knowledge of finance, for his best French financier! But all the Prussian registers of excise from 1766 to 1786, must be burnt to ashes before proof can be wanting, that M. de la Haye de Launay was a very intelligent man, thoroughly skilled in whatever knowledge may be expected from a French financier. Prussian ministers of finance, in justice to his merits, have assured me, that all the proposals and accounts he laid before that most acute and ingenious king, during a space of twenty years, were solid and clear. Infallible was he as little, as Count Mira-
beau

beau or the Pope ; but he acquired among the inhabitants of Berlin, who dreaded the Régie more than hell, particularly in the last years, confidence and love.

Frederick was not equally fortunate with all the other Frenchmen, and especially with M. de Candy, the first of all the Regisseurs, sent from Paris to Berlin, though, at the beginning of the French administration, he once wrote to Launay :
 “ He considered him and Candy as two
 “ Jupiters descended from Heaven, to
 “ convey light and order into the chaos
 “ of his finances*.”

C 4

Jupiter

* De la Haye de Launay's Refutation of Count Mirabeau, pag. 157.

Jupiter Candy came to Berlin with the design of conducting the whole reformation and management of the Prussian system of finance. We poor honest Germans think that no Frenchman, not altogether crazy, would attempt a work of such importance, if he were devoid of all practical knowledge in financial business. However M. de Candy's former place and employments did not lie this way; for he had been in Paris *Receveur de la porte St. Denis**. This place netted him, it is true, sixteen thousand livres a year, but it could not impart to him any other financial knowledge, but that of a clerk and receiver at a town-gate: yet, he fell even short of this, because some other

* Receiving Clerk at the gate of St. Denis.

other clever fellow, for a very small salary, officiated for him, and Candy purchased the title of *Secrétaire du Roi*. His place and this title inspired him with such a magnanimous confidence in his financial abilities, that, after his death, (one of his colleagues killed this Jupiter in a duel) a paper in his own hand was found with this inscription: "Conditions, under which I will agree to take the place of Comptroller-general to the King of Prussia." These very modest conditions contained neither more nor less than the four following articles: "The four first ministers belonging to the board of General direction, are to be my under-intendants. These four ministers must be bound to come to my house every day and make their

C 5

" reports;

“ reports; a guard of honour, consisting
 “ of four centinels, must be placed at
 “ my door; if these three conditions be
 “ granted by the king, I shall ask no-
 “ thing more but a very large salary.”

This paper of *Monsieur le Receveur de Candy* is still extant.

Another French enlightener of Berlin, *Monsieur Brindeaux de la Roche*, possessed the very same assurance in things he never had learnt. He was a Jupiter in another department. Brindeaux arrived at Berlin with the benevolent intention of improving, to the highest pitch of perfection, the king's forests,—in his opinion, totally neglected. For his trouble he expected no more than a salary of one hundred thousand livres, the title of

Grand

Grand maître des Eaux et Forêts, and all the perquisites belonging to such a place. Brindeaux appearing in the most elegant dresses, and promising wonderful things, the king longed to know where so great a man might have served before, and acquired his eminent knowledge? They wrote to every corner of France; but there was no such thing as tracing him out. At last arrived a letter from Paris, containing the request of a taylor, to arrest a man of the name of *Brindeaux*, who had assumed the surname of *La Roche*. This man, the taylor said, was a servant-broker, kept, in the street *St. Honoré*, a register office, and imposed upon him and all his other friends, by reporting that the King of Prussia, under promise of an immense salary, had called

him to Berlin, for the purpose of reforming, arranging, and directing the whole department of forests. On the strength of this imposition, the taylor had furnished him with fourteen suits, embroidered in the richest and most elegant manner, for which he now wanted to be paid. The description of these clothes, given by the taylor, was a catalogue of the very dresses wherein Brindeaux appeared in Berlin, dazzling the eyes of many admirers, afterwards at a loss to conceive how a man who did not even know a single tree, could be so assuming and fool-hardy as to venture upon the plan of appearing before Frederick, as the would-be enlightener and reformer of the whole Prussian department of forests.

M. de Launay kept his place till Frederick's decease, but the number of Frenchmen employed under him, decreased almost every day. At the time of his death there were no more left of them than an hundred and fifty seven, in all his dominions.

To prevent the smuggling of foreign commodities into his country, was his only aim in establishing the *Régie*, and this he obtained in so successful a manner, that all the inland manufactories rose to the most flourishing condition. Though the public revenue, from tolls and excise, encreased of course, he had by no means such an augmentation in view. On the contrary, on drawing up a new tarif, he bade the Regisseurs omit every

every article that might prove oppressive to the people, and cause well-grounded complaints. M. de Launay, in his excellent refutation of Count Mirabeau, assures us, "That the first instruction he received from Frederick was this: to spare his people, because they could not pay much; and to encourage and support industry, because a nation obliged to pay taxes, ought to be provided with all possible means of earning money." The admirers of Frederick's state economy do, consequently, not deserve that stigma with which the eloquent, but ill conducted pen of Count Mirabeau endeavours to brand them. It would carry me too far should I follow this great prince through all the various branches of this new establishment: but

I may

I may be allowed to repeat on this occasion, a state axiom which we must never lose sight of, by forming a judgment on such political measures of a king of Prussia, and which is this: That in a country like his, the establishing, supporting, and improving of manufactories, which give employment and subsistence to millions, is an object of much greater consequence and benefit to the whole nation, than foreign trade and commerce. Impressed with the wisdom of this state-maxim, Frederick constantly followed it through the whole of his reign, unbiassed by the prejudices of his censurers and the scurrilities of his slanderers. Impartial men and considerate politicians have applauded this wise conduct of the great monarch. But nothing can silence the

the outcry of many a political sciolist against it, or correct the prejudices of a great number of Litterati, whom the mighty powers of the great Count Mirabeau bow down in *soul and body*.

CHAP.

CHAP XVII.

On his East India Company and Maritime Society.

THE learned Abbé Denina says,—
 “ Frederick succeeded in all his
 “ enterprizes, except those which con-
 “ cerned commercial affairs. He was
 “ obliged to abolish the East India Com-
 “ pany, established at Emden in 1751;
 “ and his Maritime Society was likewise
 “ rather unsuccessful*.

Frederick

* Essai sur la vie & le règne de Frederick II. p. 365
 & 366.

Frederick did never abolish this East India Company. But, in the seven years war, his enemies possessed East Friesland and the port of Emden. The Company having no port, either for fitting out ships or carrying on their traffic in Asia, expired of course, but without any loss to its members; who, after the cargo of their last ship had been sold in England, recovered their capital stock with interest. This undertaking would have answered extremely well, but for some mismanagement of the Directors. For, of all the sixteen ships sent out by the Company, not one was lost, and all returned with rich cargoes.

His Maritime Society, erected afterwards, had not the least connexion with
this

this East India Company. That Society has nothing to do with the India trade, which, after the dissolution of the East India Company, has been carried on, in the Prussian dominions, in the same manner as in Portugal, by way of indults for single voyages, granted to ships belonging either to Bremen or East Friesland.

This Society was established by the King for two very wise reasons; which were: first, to encourage in his kingdom the building of ships and a maritime freight and carriage trade; and, in the second place, to share with the Emperor the great profits arising from the salt trade in Poland. To obtain the first end, the Maritime Society was bound, in the ports of the Baltic, to build every year

a cer-

a certain number of merchant-men, destined, under Prussian colours, to sail on account of the Prussian and other nations. Six thousand Dutch vessels, employed in this freight trade, convey every year much more money into the circulation of Holland, than the whole commerce with the East and West Indies. More than four hundred ships sail yearly to and from the famous sea-port of Stettin. They carry between an hundred and three hundred tons. The freight from this sea-town to Bourdeaux, for instance, was, before the seven years war, ten dollars per ton; and is, at present, still higher. Supposing the number of voyages to be no more than eight hundred per annum, we may easily conceive, from the large amount of the freight, of what importance it must

must be to a King of Prussia, to carry this trade as far as the situation of his country will admit.

Respecting the second point, we ought to recollect, that on the dismemberment of Poland, contrary to the first plan of partition, Austria took and appropriated to herself all the rock salt-petre in Poland. From a proper investigation of the matter, it appeared that, at least, the Northern Polish provinces might be furnished with sea-salt at the same price as that of rock-salt, and with great advantage to the seller. The Maritime Society, therefore, took up this business; by means of a contract between some Prussian and Liverpool merchants, got the sea-salt at a certain permanent price, and

and sold it in Poland with a profit of fifty and more per cent.

A company, instituted for such wise purposes, and provided with such means of obtaining them, could not have failed to thrive, and to be of equal advantage to the State and the joint proprietors of its stock, if the most glaring misdemeanours of Baron Goerne, Minister of State and Director General of this Company, and the large sums of money embezzled by him, had not destroyed its prosperity and caused its ruin.

Frederick's meekness, and the nobleness of his mind, never shone in a brighter light than at the trial of this illustrious culprit. Before it had transpired that

that Goerne's criminal conduct was the cause of the insolvent state of the Maritime Society, Frederick, to support their credit, had advanced more than a million of dollars. When Goerne, after his trial, became a bankrupt, a report of the Commissioners informed the King, that this money might be recovered out of Goerne's estates and other property, put to sale, if he chose to avail himself of his legal and adjudged right of precedence. In this case, all the other creditors of Goerne would have lost their demands. But Frederick returned the Commissioners the following answer: " Having made so bad a choice, and entrusted such a man with a charge of so great importance, it is but just that I lose my money."

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII.

On His Treasure.

“ **H**OW was it possible that a sove-
 “ reign of, at best, seven mil-
 “ lions of subjects, who kept on foot an
 “ army of two hundred thousand men,
 “ and erected buildings with the same
 “ facility as they are drawn in other
 “ countries, could amass a greater trea-
 “ sure than any other Monarch in Eu-
 “ rope ?”

This was once asked by a Frenchman.
 In answer to this question I can oblige
 him with the following arcanum:

Take

Take a king of the most powerful and penetrating mind; of an activity and application to business seldom to be found on thrones; a king, careful to forbear all superfluous expence, and, with a clear annual revenue of eight millions of dollars for himself and his whole court, never spending more than two hundred and twenty thousand dollars *per annum*; let their King reign forty-six years, and you'll have the treasure of King Frederick the Great.

I should rather have expected his treasure to have been greater than it was, did I not know that it was his plan and intention, never to treasure up more money than he thought necessary for the security and preservation of his state.

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“Frede-

In "Frederick the Second," says his in-
 genious panegyrist, Count Guibert, "is
 " charged with many a despotic and ill-
 " calculated step in governing his realm;
 " with having debased the coin of his
 " country, raked together an immense
 " treasure, withdrawn from the use of
 " industry vast sums, and clogged the
 " circulation of money; they reproach
 " him with having seized tolls, manu-
 " factures, posts, forests, and all lucra-
 " tive branches of revenue, and chang-
 " ed them into indirect taxes. He has
 " introduced," they say, "into his go-
 " vernment, the French system of fi-
 " nance, and let out to farmers of this
 " nation the excise and all the other
 " taxes, in diametrical opposition to all
 " sound principles of government. He
 " has,

“ has, at the same time, engrossed all
“ sources of wealth and riches, and, in
“ many respects, restrained the liberty
“ of his subjects, inasmuch, that a man
“ of fortune was not allowed to dispose
“ of his estates, or marry his children as
“ he pleased, or suffered to live in ano-
“ ther country : in his dominions all the
“ possessions of his subjects were watch-
“ ed with fiscaline covetousness, and the
“ eagerness of inquisition*.

The charges contained in this passage re-echoed from all the borders of Brandenburg and Prussia; they were the common talk of all the ministers, and, especially, of all the courtiers in Germany; the universal report in France, and the

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general

* Eloge de Frederick II. page 197 and 199.

general rumour over all Europe. The groundlessness of these charges appears, however, I trust, in some degree from what has been said already in this work, and will be placed in the strongest light by what I have more to say. A government, under which the interest falls from six to four per cent. at the same time that useful industry is encouraged, and manufactories increase and flourish, certainly does not clog the circulation of money. Another proof of the abundance of specie in the Prussian provinces, is this, that in all the different banks millions are placed at two, and two and an half per cent. Tolls, public forests, and post-revenues are in no country objects of private trade. In Prussia nobody was ever, by any law, prohibited from

mar-

marrying his children out of the country; and there are innumerable instances of rich people having married abroad, during Frederick's reign, without being taken any notice of. When did he ever prevent any man of fortune from selling his estates, or leaving his country, if he chose it? Every wise sovereign will certainly endeavour, by gentle means, to oppose the emigration of wealthy subjects; and Frederick never used any other. Count Redes, a man of great fortune, married the only daughter of a Prussian banker, of the name of Orguelin, got with her four hundred thousand dollars, went with this money to Saxony, and lived there unexchequered, and unmolested. Noblemen, it is true, were not allowed to sell their family estates to others but noblemen,

without a special royal licence. But the reasons of this statute shall be explained in the twentieth chapter of this book.

Though a clear revenue of eight millions of dollars, especially in the latter years of Frederick's reign, was annually left to his disposal, yet he laid up but a part of this sum in his treasury. "It is not my intention to gather more money," said he to Baron Horst, "than a twelve years war may require: at present, no war can possibly last so long, and to request more money than is necessary, would hurt my people." What, conformably to this maxim, he did not store in his treasury, he spent for the most benevolent purposes, for the relief of distressed subjects; for build-
ings

ings and other public concerns, best calculated to bring money into circulation. As a faithful steward of his state, and a careful manager of the public revenue, he chiefly fixed his attention upon the increase of the circulation of money.

“ A king of Prussia,” once said the mighty Count Mirabeau, “ should rather have no treasure at all* !” This, in a Frenchman, was indeed a patriotic thought; for a king of Prussia, without a treasure, must be a king of no consequence to France. The crafty Mirabeau felt this, but his dull Berlin admirers did

D 4 not,

* Letter presented to Frederick William II. the day of his accession to the throne, &c. page 48, 49, 50, 51.

not, and thought him to be Prussia's warmest and most zealous friend.

A great treasure is of indispensable necessity to a king of Prussia. The most numerous army would be altogether useless, could he not march and employ them in the very moment he has occasion for such an army. That this cannot be done without great sums of money, is obvious to the weakest understanding. To raise such sums by taxes or loans the moment they are wanted, the situation and resources of the Prussian provinces do not admit. The only expedient on such an urgency is therefore a great store of ready cash. In the most dreadful war that ever scourged a country, he did neither raise the old taxes, nor impose any
new

new one; and, after the peace was made, he not only remitted his people incredible sums of arrears, but also distributed among them many millions of money.

When Count Mirabeau bids the king of Prussia place his treasure in foreign funds*, every considerate man must certainly be at a loss to conceive how the count, who sets up for an instructor of monarchs, with the least knowledge of the European powers, and their respective relation to each other, can give such advice. Any sovereign, who has the treasure of another state in his country, is, no doubt, the absolute master of this state; he can force it to follow every

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* Letter presented to Frederick William II. the day of his accession to the throne, &c. page 58 and 59.

impulse he is pleased to give, as it is fully in his power to with-hold all the means that could enable it to act in a contrary direction.

Mr. Bushing tells us*, that, at the end of the seven years war, Frederick's treasure was most wretchedly exhausted. But this gentleman mistakes the king's private purse and the pay office for the king's treasury; this, at the close of that war, was so little exhausted, that out of it, immediately after the peace, he gave six millions of dollars to his impoverished country.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIX.

On his Coinage during the Seven Years War.

ALL the European powers, concerned in this long and destructive war, were obliged to strain to the utmost all their force and vigour. Their plans, preparations, and armies were prodigious: such trains of artillery as appeared in this war had never been seen before, and were as expensive as whole armies in former times. France raised contributions in many a country, drained many provinces of their money, and, nevertheless, contracted new debts to the amount of a thousand millions of livres.

Austria over-burthened her subjects with taxes, and the state with a never ceasing incumbrance, by creating vast sums of paper-money, and issuing a great number of state-bonds, the interest of which is paid by government. The treasure of the house of Medicis was entirely exhausted. All the millions which Francis the First had gathered with all the industry and care of an intelligent banker, were scattered and spent: Austria's public debt, at the end of the seven years war, amounted to an hundred millions of dollars: Sweden stood on the brink of bankruptcy: Russia imposed taxes and run in debt; and England increased hers in a most alarming manner. Frederick was sensible of his treasure being not equal, long to bear the expences of such

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a war:

a war: he knew, likewise, what, from their dangerous situation, his dominions would have to suffer, and forbore to grind them with extraordinary taxes: he sought for some other resource, and found it in altering the standard of his coin.

After his first invasion of Saxony and a part of Bohemia, he saw very soon that it was entirely in his power to fix, as he pleased, the value of the current specie in countries which he used as his own, and even to greater advantage, on account of the contribution they were obliged to pay: at the same rate he took their currency in the payment of taxes, he could give it out in these countries: therefore, he ordered the officers of the mint,

mint, out of a mark fine silver to coin, instead of thirteen dollars and a third, sixteen dollars; and carried this measure so far, that at last, the real value of fifteen dollars, in such bare money, was no more than five.

Without any ground, and very erroneously, it is generally supposed, that the Jew merchants Ibrahim Brig, and Moses Isaac had alone and entirely conducted this coinage, engrossed its advantages, and determined the intrinsic value of the coin. For this reason all Berlin was bickering at them. On the great illumination that was to celebrate Frederick's solemn entrance on his return from the seven years war, some witling was, therefore, much applauded for exhibiting

ing the transparency of a swine eating Frederick's d'ors, and voiding the barest of such silver coin, with the motto, *Paas Ephraim*.

These eminent Jew merchants were contractors only for the necessary bullion, and by this contract with the mint allowed a profit of eight per cent. The immense gain arising from the difference between the nominal and intrinsic value of the coin, was altogether employed to prop the tottering frame of the Prussian state.

This financial operation of Frederick led him to another speculation that wonderfully answered its purpose.

When

When Field-marshal Daun, in 1758, on his successful irruption into Saxony, proceeded so far as to take possession of Dresden, he was stopped at this place. The other part of Saxony, of course, remained in Frederick's power, and the Prussian coin was still circulating there. A Prussian mint-contractor, connected with some Austrian commissaries, was ordered by Frederick to propose to the field-marshal, "to pay the army under his command in Prussian coin, which would yield him a profit of forty per cent. This great advantage he could gain for his sovereign," said the emissary, "if he would exchange all the money he received from Vienna, for the payment of the troops under his orders, for Prussian coin, which, as

" it

"it was circulating through Saxony,
"would do as well as any other."

Daun thought this proposal to be very advantageous to the empress, and, without any delay, informed the court of Vienna of it. He was no assayer, to be sure, and all the Austrian officers of the mint, who should have known it better, were visited, it seems, with a strange absence of mind, for the proposal was agreed to. Amazing sums of Austrian sovereign-d'ors poured raw into the Prussian dominions, and were exchanged there for Prussian coin. By this operation, Daun, in the payment of the army under his command, gained forty per cent. and Frederick sixty. It was one of the means by which Frederick, who every

every year contracted for bullion to the amount of an hundred millions, for the use of his mint, during the most expensive war preserved his treasure in the very same condition as before it.

As long as the disproportion between the intrinsic and nominal value of this new money was any way moderate, it was coined under the Prussian stamp; but when this difference grew too great, to Frederick's face succeeded that of the good King of Poland, and, for variety's sake, the Prince of Anhalt-Bernburg's, from whom he purchased the use of his stamp.

The Swedes were the first of the belligerent powers that adopted Frederick's plan;

plan; they even improved on it, for the Swedish coin had scarcely any real value at all; but as the district, when they could force it into circulation, was but very small, their profit, comparatively speaking, was not great.

A consequence of this measure was, that, at the close of the seven years war, a greater sum of specie circulated through the Prussian provinces than before; but the riches of the possessors of this money existed, for the greatest part, only in imagination. It was necessary to cure them of that giddiness, with which such imaginary wealth might have infected their minds, in a manner the least hurtful to commerce and trade.

For

For this purpose, instead of cutting the knot, and beating down, as it were with one stroke, his coin to its old standard, (which must have ruined a great number of merchants, dealers, and tradesmen) he brought it near to it by a new coinage, almost the medium between the old and the war money; ordained that this middle coin should not circulate longer than one year, and then returned, with respect to the gold coin, to the old standard; but, concerning the silver, established a new one, in conformity with which, fourteen dollars are coined out of a mark fine silver.

In the seven years war the Prussian state was certainly, in a great degree, secured from destruction by the expedient.

ent I have hitherto explained. Frederick, who by weighing his own actions, never put another's opinion in the scale, but, like every powerful mind, only his own consciousness and feelings, rejoiced, therefore, in the great idea which saved his country, meanwhile half the world was crying and railing against it. He did not disown that it was a remedy as obnoxious as violent; but it was the only one that could preserve his state, and, therefore, he exulted in its being his own discovery, and would often say, with conscious pride and heartfelt satisfaction, "I owe this resource, not to my financiers, but to myself."

Beyond all expectation did it operate, not only during the war, but even after the

the peace: in the very moment of his victorious return he had money enough to rebuild his desolated towns and villages; to repair all his fortresses; to make the most expensive and useful improvements in his manufactories; and to encourage population and trade in his dominions. More than an hundred thousand of his subjects returned, therefore, to their mother-country. The grand palace in the park of Sanisbury he finished in the highest style of royal splendour, and brought, by this means, immense sums in circulation among the artists and workmen of all descriptions. He even begun, instantly, to augment his army. Some thousands of cannon were melted down and new cast. Every public debt, contracted during the war, and all its charges

charges were paid in the first year of peace. Many a million he threw out among his provinces, impoverished by the war, forgave them many millions of arrears, and yet his treasure remained unimpaired.

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

On his Sentiments and Behaviour towards the Nobility, and the Protection he granted to Common People against the Mighty.

FREDERICK the Great says in his Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg: "One family is as ancient as the other."—Thus he would sometimes ridicule the fortuitous merit of a noble extraction, and the prejudices with which it infects a weak mind.

For this reason, the nobility of Berlin distinguished themselves by a very humane way of thinking on this point, so exceeding

exceeding ticklish in Germany. No where in this country, was a gentleman, not of noble birth, better and with more kindness received, than in the noblemen's houses at Berlin. No one takes it amiss there, that Madame de Maintenon, about a century ago, said of a certain (in all likelihood, German,) lady: "She has
 " nothing of the citizen about her, except the petty pride of her nobility."*

However, among Frederick's laws we meet with one, so very strange, that, with such a philosophic King, we must suppose it to be a mere jest. When he, in the beginning of his reign, framed and organized anew the Royal Society of Berlin, and it was extremely difficult to

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find

* Elle n'a de bourgeois, que sa vanité sur sa noblesse.

find members, he enacted this very odd and comical law: "A nobleman may be a member of this society, without staining his nobility." At the request of M. de Maupertuis, President of that society, this law was abolished afterwards, and since, times and sentiments are vastly changed; for long ago, the Empress of Russia, Catharine the Second, became member of the Royal Society at Berlin.

In the disposal of civil employments, Frederick set no value on a noble extraction, though Count Mirabeau seems to doubt it. Here the highest desert, and the greatest capacity were always preferred. Many of his Ministers of State were not of noble birth. The famous and worthy President, Domhard, was old
and

and grey-headed, when Frederick nobilitated him. All his Cabinet Counsellors were not noble.

Count Mirabeau reproaches Frederick with having countenanced the most glaring and unreasonable injustice, in prohibiting the nobility, desirous of paying their debts, from selling their estates to any one but a nobleman.* But he grossly mistakes, it seems, the motives and principles of the Legislator, and is little acquainted with the frame of his government, when he charges this law with absurdity, and its observers with madness. Frederick always did justice to the nobility, and, doing so, would sometimes

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* Letter presented to Frederick William the Second, the day of his accession to the throne, page 25, and 26.

not care for wronging those who were not of that order.

On numberless occasions, he disclosed his mind about the origin and existence of the nobility, in a manner, that did equal honour to his sentiments and those privileged members of civil societies.—Bastiani presumed once to assert at the king's table, that every sovereign had a full right to take away from the nobility, the immunity of their lands; and that for this purpose, in order to relieve all the other classes of subjects, nothing was required but a declaration of the sovereign's will. “By no means,” replied Frederick, rather with some vehemence; “the nobility have as much, and perhaps more right to be free, than we princes have, to rule them. The nobility

" bility are the relicks of the free an-
" cient nation, that, in times of yore,
" chose princes for the sole purpose of
" leading on the armies who fought for
" national liberty, and maintained it."—

These were the sentiments of a king, so often charged with having either not known, or totally disregarded the rights of men. Yet, to be sure, he never suspected, that at Versailles, these rights should once be vindicated against the grand monarch, and Bastiani's assertion against the noblesse.

It was a constant maxim with Frederick, that all European princes were bound in justice and prudence to support the nobility by all possible means, especially on account of the strength which they afforded their armies. He has very forc-

bly expressed himself on this subject, in his posthumous works,* though certainly in a manner that must greatly depress not only all officers, not nobly born; but also every gentleman, not of noble extraction.

An author of this description forbears, of course, commenting on such strange opinions, and utterly unexpected assertions of a philosophic King. Enough, Frederick gave his nobility every support, and did it for the very reasons which he openly professed. He spent vast sums in improving noblemen's estates, when the means of their proprietors were not equal to such undertakings. After the seven years war, he presented the nobility in Silesia with three hun-

* Oeuvres posthumes de Frederick II. &c. Tom. v. pages 162, 167, 168.

hundred thousand dollars, and assisted them with two hundred thousand more, as they were framing those famous establishments, calculated for the support and defence of their common credit and property against the rapacity of usurers and lawyers, and the chicanery of creditors; and saved, by these immortal gifts, four hundred noble families in that province. He even paid the debts of such noblemen, as by misfortune were disabled from discharging them. The nobility in Pomerania, after the seven years war, received from him five hundred thousand dollars to satisfy their creditors, and the same sum to repair and restore their estates. In improving these estates, he afterwards spent, for some time, three hundred thousand dollars *per annum*. With the same generosity he

assisted the nobility of other provinces. Large marshy tracts were drained and formed into rich meadows, waste lands changed into tillage ground, and farm-houses erected. Improvements, which doubled and trebled the revenue of a nobleman, were often achieved with a few thousand dollars. He was not obliged to refund the capital, but only bound to pay one per cent. interest, and at most two, if the increase of his revenue was very great. These interests were spent, especially in Pomerania, in pensions for poor noblemen's widows and country schoolmasters. The Memoirs of Count Herzberg, read before the Royal Society of Berlin, are immortal monuments of these glorious deeds, so worthy of immortality.

Such

Such great favours did Frederick confer upon the nobility, because he supposed them to be the quintessence of the original stock of the nation. He would have entirely missed his aim, had he suffered the running in debt, so often caused by the most extravagant profusion, to be a way of transferring noblemen's estates into the hands of people, who did not belong to that order. Moreover, by not allowing such alienations with respect to the greatest number of his provinces, he did but follow the common law, which prohibited all but noblemen from possessing noble estates.

Count Mirabeau, perfectly ignorant of all this, could the less comprehend this measure, as the custom and manners of France stood between him and all possi-

bility of entering into those German ideas. In France, a Jew was suffered to purchase the dukedom of Pequigny; by the lawful judgment of the Parliament of Paris, he was maintained in the exercise of the right of patronage, and all the curates in that dukedom directed to pray for him in the pulpit.

But, however disposed Frederick was to support and cherish noble families, he was not less displeased with that universal aristocracy, which Count Mirabeau has full right, to call the scourge of monarchical governments, and of which he justly says: "The people do not fear
 " and reject kings; but their ministers,
 " their courtiers, their nobility, in short,
 " aristocracy."*

* Letter presented to Frederick William II. &c.
 page 28.

A philosophic German king, could perceive better than any other monarch, the propensity of the German noblesse to misuse their privilege; the almighty charm of the very sound of their title over every slavish mind; the petty haughtiness of noble dolts, and the mean cringing of the stupid bourgeois at their feet. Frederick, far from sanctioning any barbarous preponderance of the nobles, during his whole reign never swerved from this wise maxim, that it is the duty of sovereigns to protect the lower class of people against the cruelty of petty tyrants. He mistrusted every man in power, and for this reason, would listen to the complaints of every peasant, nay, often decline punishing the most glaring iniquity of such people.

The famous transaction of Miller Arnold, is an humiliating proof, how by love of *justice*, a sovereign may be misled into the greatest *injustice*. Many reports have been circulated through Europe, respecting this event, which from its nature, causes and consequences, forms one of the most prominent features in the character of Frederick's reign. I shall, therefore, state it here, as it has been related to me by a well informed man, who, without fear of contradiction, dares say, truth is sacred to me!

Miller Arnold lived in Newmark, tenant of a mill, which he rented from a nobleman of the name of Gersdorf, one of the king's counsel for that province. The water that drove the mill rose within the estate of this nobleman, and passed

sed through several ponds before it reached the mill. He found it convenient to lead this water round one of those ponds, without altering, however, its course to the mill. Arnold was deeply in debt, and at last unable to pay his rent. This occasioned a commission of bankruptcy against him, and the mill was put to sale.

The miller's wife was intimately connected with a lawyer, clerk, to Colonel Heuking's regiment, quartered in the neighbourhood. To this dear friend she complained of her distress. He drew up a memorial to the King, wherein he said:
 " By the commission of bankruptcy issued against Arnold, he was greatly
 " injured. The mill-water was taken
 " from him, and he, nevertheless, had
 " been

“ been obliged to pay the whole rent
 “ This had involved him in debt, and
 “ the now intended sale of the mill
 “ could not fail to complete his ruin.”

Frederick, struck with the contents
 of this petition, sent it to the High
 Court of Justice at Berlin, giving them
 to understand, “ that though it was not
 “ usual with him to interfere in judicial
 “ matters, yet Arnold’s complaint seem-
 “ ed to set forth so atrocious an injury,
 “ that he could not forbear enjoining
 “ them, with the utmost attention to in-
 “ quire into it, and to do justice to the
 “ petitioner.”

This inquiry was made, and the rule
 of the Inferior Court at Custrin con-
 firmed; however, without informing the
 King

King of the legal causes of this judgment, which, no doubt, ought to have been done. For, though it is very comforting to be in the right, yet we should never neglect what duty, or even prudence directs us to observe towards our Sovereign.

Arnold, in the most lamentable manner, petitioned the King again. Frederick, wondering at his having received no report from the High Court of Justice, ordered it to be sent. The Judges, having returned all the papers and records, concerning this lawsuit, to the Inferior Court, begged, for this reason, to be excused: And, upon his asking "why these papers might not be had again?" answered, that "the third instance of revision being open to the petitioner, it

“ it was still in his power to recover
 “ whatever was due to him.” But the
 sentence of the Senate of Revision was
 not more favourable to Arnold than the
 former judgments; and the Judges neglected again to state to the King the
 true circumstances of the case, and to explain the legal grounds upon which they
 proceeded against the insolvent miller.
 As, therefore, this bare-faced petitioner
 appeared again before Frederick, lamenting that, notwithstanding his Royal protection, he must fall a sacrifice to the
 partiality and iniquity of his judges, he
 was induced to suspect, that his Courts
 of Justice had strong reasons to conceal
 from him the particulars of Arnold’s
 cause, and the grounds of their proceedings, which now appeared to him in the
 most odious light. Thus prepossessed
 against

against his Court of Justice, he betook himself to an expedient of getting at the truth, which he often tried, though not always with success. He ordered the next commander of a regiment, with the assistance of a lawyer, to inquire into Arnold's cause. This commander was Colonel Heuking, who knew nothing about the matter, and the assisting lawyer was the intimate friend of Mrs. Arnold, and the author of all the petitions by Arnold delivered to the King. We may easily conceive the contents of the Colonel's report. "It must be obvious," said he, "to any one who had an opportunity of examining the local circumstances of Arnold's case, that this unfortunate man was used by his judges in the most iniquitous and oppressive manner."

The

The King now thought himself possessed of the most convincing proofs, that his Courts of Justice, in three instances, had pursued the most grinding plan of iniquity and oppression. Resolved to inflict an exemplary punishment on these vile corruptors of public justice, by a Cabinet's order, directed to the High Chancellor, Baron Furst, he bade the three Judges Friedel, Ransleben, and Graun, who at Berlin had tried Arnold's cause, the very same day to appear before him. The High Chancellor, foreseeing what might happen, nobly determined not to forsake the three Judges, who had conducted the trial with the greatest impartiality and candour, and, though uncalled for, went with them to the King.

Frederick

Frederick had the tooth-ach. His cheeks wrapped up, he lay on a sofa, darting dreadful looks at the unexpected appearance of the High Chancellor, which he attributed to quite other causes. He flew into the wildest passion. The High Chancellor attempted to defend the Judges; but the King exclaimed, "What do you want, Sir?" "Who sent for you? I know you full well: Away! away! Herewith you are cashiered." He added some harsh expressions, and, after the unfortunate High Chancellor had left the room, burst like a thunder-storm upon the three Judges, and inveighed terribly against their unpardonable injustice. Like men did these three gentlemen defend themselves. With the most exalted heroism one of them said to Frederick:

"Sire,

“ Sire, I have tried Arnold’s cause
 “ with the strictest adherence to impar-
 “ tiality and justice; and, should your
 “ Majesty order me ten times to alter the
 “ judgment, I would not; because I
 “ could not do it without violating my
 “ oath and hurting my conscience.”

At this speech, Frederick, like a whirl-
 wind, sprung from his seat, flew out of
 the room, called the guard, and said,
 “ That’s devilish insolence, however!”
 Now, the three judges stood trembling
 like aspen-leaves, for fear that he was
 out of his senses. The king, perceiving
 this agitation, turned to them with great
 kindness, and said, “ Never fear, your
 “ persons shall not be hurt; I must only
 “ have you arrested!”

If ever the heroic conquering of a violent passion did honour to a man, Frederick the Great certainly deserves this praise; he fancied himself in the right, and had every reason to believe it. The judge, who in so manly a manner opposed him, he must suppose guilty of an insult upon majesty; and, notwithstanding, he behaved with so much mildness. Such sudden transitions from the utmost rage to the sweetest softness, we never meet with but in great and privileged minds.

The guard came, and the three judges were sent to the common town-gaol. Frederick insisted upon having all the papers and records belonging to Arnold's lawsuit: they lay several days on his table: he perused them; and is said to have

have once exclaimed: "Should I have done wrong!" However, the impudent report of Colonel Heuking, or rather of Mrs. Arnold's gallant, got the better of his doubts; and, on the 11th of December, 1779, he sent to Baron Zedliz, his minister of state for the judicial department, a short instruction how the prosecution against the three judges ought to be conducted, and their sentence worded.

Baron Zedliz referred it to the criminal court, who pronounced judgment according to justice and duty. The king reversed this sentence, and prescribed again how the three judges should be punished. Baron Zedliz ordered a copy to be made of the very words of the monarch, which, of course, had the form

form, not of a sentence, but an order, and sent him this copy. The king, sensible of the impropriety of this form, wanted to have it altered, and for that purpose, returned the copy to Baron Zedliz. But this minister, with the noblest intrepidity, told the king: "That of all the members of the criminal court, not one could, or would sign such a judgment; and that his conscience did not even allow him to counter-sign it."

Greater courage did Frederick never show in the field, than the High Chancellor Furst, Baron Zedliz, and all the judges proved in this dreadful cause: in all likelihood he was sensible of it, for he gave Zedliz no answer. But his sentence, signed by him alone, January 1st,

1st, 1780, was put in execution. The mill was restored to Arnold, and his judges were condemned to pay him damages and costs; the High Chancellor was cashiered, and Count Finkenstein, son to the minister of state, and president of the Regency at Custrin, experienced the same fate. All the members of this court lost their places, and were imprisoned for twelve months. Out of the three Berlin judges, Friedel and Giaun were discarded, and, for a twelve-month, sent to Spandau; but the third, Mr. Ransleben, who, in the instance of revision, had drawn up the judgment against Arnold, was acquitted, because Frederick found it recorded, that he several times had insisted upon informing the king of the nature and circumstances of Arnold's cause, that he might be convinced

vinced of the legality of their proceedings and sentence. But he had been over-ruled by all the other Members of the Court, and this excused him with the King.

M. Gerfsdorf would likewise have been deprived of his place; but, with equal magnanimity and courage, he wrote him:

“ Your Majesty is undoubtedly disposed
 “ to do justice, as well to your vassals as
 “ to a miller. I shall not entreat your
 “ mercy; the strictest justice is all I
 “ crave. My adjoined bills of investi-
 “ ture inform your Majesty, that it is
 “ my indisputable right to use and con-
 “ duct my waters as I please; and that,
 “ without encroaching upon this right,
 “ you cannot prevent and prohibit me
 “ from it.”

This is the exact statement of this famous transaction. The true cause of Frederick's violent conduct, however, lies in an incident which happened about eighteen months before. Thoroughly to understand that wonderful passage, we must be acquainted with this event:

Frederick, altogether displeased with the administration of justice in his dominions, earnestly desired a plan of improving it. Once, on his usual journey to Silesia, where many thousand lawsuits were pending, he said to the present High Chancellor Carmer, then directing minister in that province: "Can no
 " means possible be devised to shorten
 " the course of judicial proceedings,
 " without overthrowing and confound-
 " ing the necessary order, and to bring
 " this

“ this world of lawsuits to a speedy
 “ issue?”

The minister replied, that this might be easily done, if he would give his Royal sanction to a new regulation of the manner of managing and conducting judicial contests, which Frederick was very willing to grant. When, the following year, he visited Silesia again, four thousand causes were finally determined, without giving any legal reason to complain. The monarch, pleased with this unexpected dispatch, had the new regulation and the whole way of proceeding explained to him, approved of all, and said to M. Carmer: “ May all kinds of law-
 “ suits be contracted upon the same
 “ plan? Pray, is this possible?”

“Very possible,” answered the minister, “as soon as your Majesty orders it to be done. Yet great difficulties and obstacles are to be surmounted; for every where they cleave but too much to the old procedure and practice.” “Never mind that,” replied the King; “I’ll find ways to overcome them. I wish you would directly go to Berlin, carry your plan with you, and we’ll easily settle the matter.” M. Carmer went. The king called together the high chancellor, some ministers of state for the department of justice, some presidents of courts of judicature, and other famous lawyers, to take this plan into consideration, and give their opinion about it.

They

They all, with one voice, opposed this plan. In the temple of Themis they stuck as fast to the Old Testament, as in the days of old in the temple of Jerusalem. Whole volumes of dissertations poured upon the King, to convince him of the impracticability of the new plan. The king was no lawyer, and, of course, could not work his way, through the chaotic darkness raised about him, to that light which he so eagerly longed for. In this embarrassment, he had recourse to a man, equally renowned for his profound knowledge of law matters and his untainted honesty, the President de Reboeur. This gentleman was called to the king; he came, and the following conversation ensued betwixt them:

F 3. Frede-

Frederick: " Sir, I know you to be a
 " profound lawyer and an honest
 " man. Upon your honour and
 " oath, resolve me these two ques-
 " tions: Is Minister Carmer's scheme
 " good and useful? Is it practica-
 " ble?"

Rebocur: " As your Majesty asks me in
 " this manner, I reply to both your
 " queries, with the fullest persua-
 " sion, Yes! However, one difficul-
 " ty remains."

Frederick: " What?"

Rebocur: " By the proposed method,
 " every lawsuit is to be conducted
 " like an inquisition. The whole
 " matter, therefore, depends on this
 " point:

“ point: Is it your royal will, that
“ against all defendants your judges
“ shall proceed as against crimi-
“ nals?”

Frederick: “ By no means; that will
“ never do; inquisition must be
“ confined to criminals.”

Reboeur: “ But, this inconvenience ex-
“ cepted, there are many excellent
“ things in Minister Carmer’s plan.”

Frederick: “ Well, then, let’s select
“ them, and try to connect them
“ together.”

Now all his ideas were thrown into the
utmost confusion. The ministers and
lawyers were assembled again the next
F 4 day.

day. M. Carmer, with great ability, commented on his scheme, and strenuously fought and protested against any mutilation of his plan; but to no purpose. A new regulation of judicial proceedings was patched up, comprehending not quite one sheet of letter-press, the most fantastical *pasticcio* that, since the discovery of printing, ever made its appearance. M. Carmer returned to Breslaw. We may easily conceive what this gentleman felt and thought. The new-fangled monster was published and followed, as much as possible. But inconsistency and impracticability made it soon the laughing stock of all the Prussian provinces and foreign countries.

A monarch of the common stamp, would not have felt so soon as Frederick
how

how egregiously he was misled; he felt it immediately, and with the deepest indignation; therefore, he waited only for an opportunity of falling upon his first law officers. To burst forth, like a hurricane, that bears down all in its way; he wanted nothing but an occasion, and this Arnold's cause afforded him.

Deep and long concealed indignation directed, therefore, his conduct in this affair. Here, in his opinion, he had in his hands the most incontrovertible proofs of the iniquity of his courts of justice. He laid hold on this opportunity. Baron Furst, on this occasion, lost his place, though chiefly for reasons I shall gently touch upon in the twenty-fifth chapter. M. Carmer succeeded him. The great revolution in the whole law system of

Prussia followed, and after the gloomy and tempestuous night came days calm and serene.

However, with the lower class of people, whom Frederick was so anxious to protect against every kind of oppression, Arnold's case had a very pernicious effect. The record, which, concerning this lawsuit, was dictated by the king himself, and by his command inserted in all gazettes and newspapers, contained these remarkable words: "The lowest
" peasant, nay, every beggar is as well a
" man as his majesty, and has an equal
" claim to justice. Before *her* all per-
" sonal distinction must disappear." A
" prince may sue a peasant, or a boor a
" prince; the one is neither worse nor
" better than the other."

As

As, in this record, by the king himself every peasant was declared, in the eye of justice, to be of equal value to a prince, every clown in the Prussian dominions fancied himself to be a Prince. "Princes," they said, "are not obliged to perform either foccage, or any other kind of service; princes pay neither rent-corn nor taxes; the king, of course, has taken away from us all these incumbrances." In conformity with this reasoning, they refused all kind of services; and, at Ziesar, a great royal domain, the peasants could but by military force be compelled to gather in the harvest. This madness spread from village to village, and is not yet entirely cured.

Whoever examines the worth of human actions merely by the balance of civil law, is, with respect to many transactions, by no means a competent judge. Sometimes, with great honour to ourselves, we may be cast by courts of justice, and, with the purest love of justice and the most gallant conduct, lose our cause.

C H A P XXI.

On the Accounts of his Revenue and Expenditure, which every Year he stated to his Ministers of State, and his yearly Reckoning with himself.

RAYNAL, in his history of the European settlements in India, most ardently wishes once to see a king, disposed to give his people an account of his expenditure. This wish was fulfilled long before Raynal's work appeared.—Long before had this immortal monarch every year stated to his ministers, the most exact account of his income and expences.

On

On a fixed day, commonly the 16th, 17th, or 18th of June, all the ministers belonging to the board of general direction, delivered to the king their last year's accounts, and their statements of the revenue of the next. This day was called the review of the ministers, but it deserved a greater name.

Frederick usually received them very kindly, and they all dined with him.— After having examined their accounts and statements, he frequently disposed of some vacant pensions, and then said: “Gentlemen, you have given me your accounts of the last year, and stated the revenue I am to expect in the next. It is but just, that I now inform you, how I have spent the surplus I received from you last year.”

Now

Now he went into his closet and fetched his account of the sums he had expended the last twelve months, for the relief and support of his subjects. These commonly amounted to about three millions of dollars. In his account, he said for instance :

Dollars.

" To the town of Koenigsberg,	
" to alleviate the loss sustain-	
" ed by the last fire —	
	700,000
" To the subjects in Newmark,	
" because of their last bad	
" harvest — —	
	100,000
" For repairing the dykes of the	
" Oder, and supplying the	
" loss caused by the last in-	
" undation — —	
	230,000
" For rebuilding in stone the	
" city of Calies, destroyed	
" by fire . . .	
	93,000
	" For

Dollars.

“For improving noblemen’s
 “estates in Pomerania - 300,000
 and so forth.” Some ministers are still
 living, who, in former times, were pre-
 sent when Frederick stated his royal ac-
 counts. Count Blumenbach, Baron Horst,
 Count Shulenburg-Kennert, and Baron
 Werder, are of this number.

Yet more interesting and worthy ad-
 miration is Frederick’s reckoning with
 himself; his annual expenditure being
 fixed at a certain sum, which he never
 exceeded. On this point, a letter, with
 which Count Herzberg has honoured
 me, contains an authentic and important
 account. “I eagerly wish,” says he in
 this letter, “that his present Majesty
 “might allow the publication of Frede-
 “rick’s

rick's testament, which alone would
 be an immortal monument of this mo-
 narch. He says in his will, that from
 the public revenue he had never taken
 more than 220,000 dollars a year,
 which he had looked upon as his com-
 petence, and upon all the rest as the
 property of the state. This is literal-
 ly true, and highly praise-worthy in
 a monarch, who every year had
 24,000,000 at his disposal, and a nett
 overplus of 5,000,000 or 6,000,000,
 which he constantly employed to in-
 crease the prosperity of all his subjects,
 and the intrinsic strength of his realm,
 but never misused to feed the covet-
 ousness of some few individuals *."

No

* " Je souhaiterois beaucoup, que le roi voulut
 permettre de publier le testament de Frederick II.
 " qui

No more than 220,000 dollars did Frederick annually appropriate to his own use. People who compared this royal frugality to the profusion of Lewis the Fifteenth, Madame de Pompadour, Madame du Barry, and their *noble* retinue, would sometimes be weak enough to think him a miser. But a miser locks up his wealth in his iron chests, while Frederick spent his riches for the most noble and benevolent purposes.

Once
 " qui seul faisoit son monument le plus durable. Il y
 " dit, qu'il n'avoit pris du revenu de l'état, que
 " 220,000 écus par an, qu'il avoit regardé comme
 " sa competence, mais tout le reste, comme la propriété
 " de l'état. Cela est vrai au pied de la lettre & bien
 " précieux pour un souverain, qui avoit 24 millions à
 " sa disposition, & un surplus de 5 ou 6 millions, qu'il
 " n'employoit, que pour étendre la prospérité de tous
 " ses sujets et la force intérieure de l'état, mais non
 " pour satisfaire la cupidité de quelques individus."

Once he said to Baron Horst: " In
 " every part of my dominions, where
 " population and trade flourish, I find it
 " very easy to support and quicken the
 " circulation of money: but it is ex-
 " tremely difficult in such provinces as
 " Hinder Pomerania, Lauenburg, and
 " Butow, where even large bodies of
 " troops cannot be quartered. Much
 " more money every month goes out of
 " such provinces and places in taxes and
 " duties, than can possibly flow back, as
 " they have no commercial intercourse
 " with any other province. To assist
 " them with money, like alms, distribut-
 " ed among their inhabitants, would
 " serve no purpose; nay, would crush all
 " spirit of industry. For the inborn
 " laziness of mankind prefers the scanty
 " pittance of idleness, to plenty and
 " abund-

“ abundance, earned by fruitful exer-
 “ tion. Therefore, in populous provinces,
 “ I am constantly augmenting the num-
 “ ber of buildings, which, though some-
 “ times they may seem useless, give em-
 “ ployment to every artist and workman
 “ that wants it. In uncultivated places
 “ I endeavour to rouse cultivation, by
 “ changing waste lands into tillage-
 “ ground, and encouraging every means
 “ of improving the soil. This is useful
 “ in itself and increases population.”

Thus spoke the great manager of his
 state; and speeches like this, drawn from
 genuine and uncorrupted sources, poste-
 rity will read with pleasure.

C H A P. XXII.

*On his Cabinet Counsellors, and the public
Opinion of the Influence of their Wives and
Mistresses.*

THE title of cabinet counsellor was
a mere appellation of honour, as it
commonly is with all the German coun-
sellors, for whose counsel no body cares.
Frederick's cabinet counsellors were nei-
ther more nor less than secretaries, oblig-
ed to prepare the cabinet business, and to
draw up the various dispatches and orders.
But to deny, that sometimes with the
usual cunning of their profession, they
were able to practise some design or other,
or to foist into the royal orders some
ideas

ideas of their own, would be as much as to say, that the king was not less than a god, and his secretaries more than men.

Mr. Denina tells us, that "a secretary
" of the name of Eichel, who under
" Frederick William the First, had been
" nothing but a mere transcriber, was
" under the reign of Frederick the
" Second, more than twenty years, a
" kind of premier."* Mr. Denina's
authority must awe every one, who con-
siders his connexions, the important
manuscripts he could consult, and their
presumptive authors. However, he is
extremely wrong in this assertion.

In the whole frame of Frederick's go-
vernment, there was no such thing as a
premier.

* Essai sur la vie & le regne de Frederick II. p. 418.

premier. Eichel was cabinet secretary, both to Frederick William the First, and his great son. Nature had formed him for this place, and he held it till his death. He had been present, as it were, at the creation of the Prussian monarchy. He was a living record of all the state affairs, which, with the greatest confidence, Frederick could apply to on every occasion; and such records all state-rulers want, as the king of kings does not invest them with any part of his omniscience.

The interest of these cabinet counsellors must have been very great, however, if even their wives had such a transcendent power under Frederick's reign, as Mr. Denina supposes, who being an Italian *abbé*, is very apt to magnify female

male sagacity, interest and power. "Did we not see," says he, "the wife of counsellor Stelter, publicly sell her patronage, because her husband was much respected by all the heads of the divers departments? Could she not with some reason, boast of her power of making ministers of state, as it was through her interest that Mr. Michaelis got this high preferment?"*

However strongly I otherwise believe in female shrewdness, and the ladies' power of directing and modifying all sublunary transactions, yet here my duty urges me to contradict the amiable Italian. Frederick had taken notice of Mr Michaelis's

* Essai sur la vie & le caractère de Frederick II. p. 419.

Michaelis's distinguished abilities, long before he raised him to that exalted station. His name was set down in the register which he kept, of such men as he thought worthy of nearer inspection and extraordinary preferment, and out of which he chose many a president and minister of state.

If ever one of Frederick's cabinet-counsellors was possessed of any overgrown influence, it could but originate in the weakness of the ministers of state; who, for the trouble of informing them of the ideas, the king had occasionally uttered on subjects, belonging to their different departments, would recompense him with advancing and aggrandizing his friends or relations. This, for ought I know, might be Stelter's case, and grist

to Madam Stelter's mill. But, otherwise, the cabinet-counsellors, whose chief province it was to set down, in writing, what the king dictated, could have but very little interest indeed.

Popular opinions of the great influence of such people, as have no influence at all, no sovereign is able to prevent. A page of honour to Frederick the Great, sold, for six hundred dollars, his protection to a man, who was going to establish a manufactory of trenchers and wooden pipe bowls. This modest petitioner asked but the following trifles: First, a sum of twenty thousand dollars to be advanced by the king. In the second place, the forest of Liebenwalde, about two miles in length; and thirdly, the royal domain Zerpenscheuffe to be entailed upon him and

and his children. If this creator of pipe-bowls had made some reasonable demand, he might have succeeded; and if so, would certainly have entertained not the smallest doubt that the patronage of a page of honour was a very mighty protection.

“Madame du Trouffel,” says Count Mirabeau*, “disposed, during Frederick’s reign, of the most important and profitable places under government.” I have most carefully inquired into this fact, and the following is the result of my researches.

Madame du Trouffel was daughter of
Lieutenant General Schwerin, whose re-
giment

* Histoire secrète de la Cour de Berlin, Tom. I. p. 167.

giment had their quarters in Brandenburg. She was maid of honour to the queen dowager, and a beautiful girl, highly *enlightened*. Many people suspected her of an amorous intrigue with Porporino, an Italian singer, whose voice had been improved in a way, that inspired all *enlightened* Berlin ladies with a particular *penchant* for the great virtuoso. An old court-dame charged Miss Schwerin with having passed a night with Porporino, and proved this charge. This story being much noised abroad, Miss Schwerin was expelled the court. Her intrigue with Porporino was followed by a notorious amour with the infamous bishop of Breslaw, Mr. Shafgotsh. However, against the general opinion, she happened to find a husband. This bold hymenial adventurer was Baron Kleist, a young

a young and rich Prussian nobleman. Their marriage took its natural course. Baron Kleist, by the most extravagant prodigality of his wife, was forced to lay hold of every opportunity of increasing his ways and means: he embarked in vast mercantile speculations, followed by severe losses and commissions of bankruptcy. Meanwhile his lady, exceedingly tired with all these doings, turned her speculations another way, and chose Mr. du Trouffel, a major of artillery, for her gallant. Baron Kleist, not versed in such matters, remonstrated against this piece of gallantry. His unfashionable remonstrance being, with much *hauteur*, rejected by his lady, he set off and left her in the lurch, for which she revenged herself by a divorce from him, and a marriage with Major du Trouffel. This

was hardly consummated, when she became the declared mistress of counsellor Galster,

She took care to have it trumpeted about, that she was the mistress of this counsellor; and her carriage would often stand whole nights before Galster's door. She gave public audiences, promised favours to her friends, and threatened her enemies. With Baron Goerne, by Galster, as minister of state, proposed to the king, she conditioned to marry her eldest daughter. But this negociation transpired, and roused such an universal indignation, that the stipulated marriage must be set aside; and, a short time after, Galster was sent to Spandau.

Poor

Poor Major du Trouffel lived afterwards three years with his dame. But being ordered, as commander of a brigade of artillery, to take the field in 1778, he shot himself with great coolness. Madame du Trouffel now began to sicken, and in Berlin her distemper was deemed incurable. She applied, however, to the famous Count St. Germain, and was by him radically cured. She shewed a stone as big as a hen's egg, from which, she said, the Count's medicines had delivered her. But the Berlin public were inclined to suspect, that the disease, cured by St. Germain, was rather some remainder of her intimacy with the infamous bishop of Breslaw. Two years after, Madame du Trouffel was carried off by a malignant fever.

Anxiously to weigh the interest of ladies with Frederick's cabinet counsellors, and the influence of others over these ladies, would, no doubt, be an inglorious toil. But if any affairs of gallantry could, in the least, influence his reign, it deserves, I think, as much the attention of my readers, as that of M. Denina and Count Mirabeau.

C H A P. XXIII.

On his power of governing the Minds of Men in general; and, especially, of his Generals, Ministers, Companions and Officers, Civil and Military.

N O one, undoubtedly, has more necessity of a profound knowledge of the world, and the great art of reading the heads and hearts of men, than a king. These are the elements of the truly royal science, of placing every one on the very spot, where, according to his capacity, he can exert himself to the greatest advantage; of scrutinizing every man's character and mental powers; and of screwing out of him what may be most

beneficial to the state. Frederick the Great conned and practised this royal art in the highest perfection; and, during his whole reign, kept his keen and powerful mind constantly employed in the study and choice of men.

“ I squeeze the lemon, and having got its juice, I throw it away,” did Frederick never say, neither of Voltaire, nor any great or little man in his service. This is one of the scandalous aspersions thrown on his character: but often would he say: “ We must press the lemon to get its juice;” whereby he meant, that men must be forcibly acted upon to bring forth what is within them. This is a fine princely saying, and not the barbarous cant of an ungrateful tyrant.

Frederick's

Frederick's profound contempt of mankind, is often and bitterly complained of. But did these complainers ever reflect on the difficulty, the impossibility perhaps, of being a monarch, able and attentive to unfold all the doublings of the human heart, without utterly despising mankind? May God preserve every pure and spotless heart of experiencing and knowing as much of the world and human kind, as all wise and penetrating sovereigns experience and know. During a reign of almost half a century, Frederick, no doubt, had been tricked and imposed on many a time. He had often been deceived by the very people he had honoured with particular confidence and his daily conversation. David, King of Israel, said, "All men are liars!" And Frederick, King of

Prussia, was of opinion, that all men were cheats !

He had once, on this topic, a very extraordinary conversation, with the companions of his evening hours. One of them, Baron Horst, has communicated to me the king's speech, in his own words. "All men," said Frederick, "want to cheat." Baron Horst, and the rest of his company, found this assertion too harsh and humiliating for the whole human race. But the king replied, with great propriety and truth, "In my opinion, every one is a cheat, who, by concealing or darkening the true point of view, and setting forth circumstances favourable to his secret views, induces another, and especially his master, to believe what is false. The best

“ best of my servants and friends is, un-
 “ doubtedly, in this case : neither shall
 “ I except myself from the general
 “ doom.—I ask you, gentlemen, upon
 “ your honour, if, on every occasion, you
 “ wish me to know your inmost thoughts?
 “ Self-interest is the deepest spring of
 “ human actions: all men are but too
 “ fond of minding in all things, and
 “ before all things, their own interest.

“ Do you know the story of a father
 “ in Normandy, who, on his death-bed,
 “ giving some instructions to his son,
 “ said to him, ‘ My son, I advise thee
 “ completely to trust—.’ Here the father
 “ stopped, and the son asked, ‘ whom,
 “ father ?’ He answered, ‘ Nobody !’

The

The conversation went on, and Frederick told his companions the following tale:—"Alphonfus the wife, King of
 " Naples, on a hunting party, went to a
 " famous hermit, and conversed with
 " him, more than two hours, in his cavern. His suite waited meanwhile
 " before its entrance. When the king
 " had left the cavern, he sent for his
 " premier, his mistress, who loved him
 " dearly, and one of his favourites, who
 " would often assert, that he loved the
 " king as his dearest bosom friend. All
 " these gentlefolks were assured by the
 " monarch, that the hermit had presented him with the most extraordinary
 " gift, a small mirror, endowed with
 " the charm of representing every one
 " who looked into it, with all his most
 " secret thoughts, wishes and schemes.

" I saw

" I saw in it myself seated on the throne
" of Constantinople, and keeping the
" pope within reasonable bounds. Hav-
" ing said this, the king pulled out the
" mirror, and asked his first minister to
" look into it. This gentleman, after a
" deep bow, assured the sovereign of his
" readiness to lay down his life for him
" that very moment ; but that he, by no
" means, could give up and devote his
" soul to Satan, without doing which, it
" was impossible to look into the mirror,
" most undoubtedly the work of the
" prince of hell. The king now pre-
" sented it to his mistress : but she, even
" more careful of her dear redeemed
" soul than the premier, would not,
" for all the riches in the world, look
" into it. The king hoped, that his
" dear bosom-friend, at least, would have

" no

" no objection; however, this gentleman,
 " otherwise bold enough, turned pale;
 " trembled, and flew away from the
 " glass. Alphonfus closed this strange
 " and singular scene with the following
 " speech: My friends, this little look-
 " ing-glass is of the most common kind,
 " and bought for a mere trifle: Satan
 " had nothing to do with it. But learn,
 " from what has happened just now,
 " that no man living likes to be seen as
 " he is."

Frederick believed, as firmly as Al-
 phonfus, that no man likes to be seen as
 he is; and that people, otherwise pretty
 honest, will sometimes take the liberty
 of cheating their king. It was hardly
 possible to refute him on this point. To

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a clergyman, who, in a treatise on self-love, had defended the same opinion,—he testified his approbation by a cabinet letter; and the whole of his conduct towards his subjects, and all his officers, civil and military, proves, that he never parted from this axiom to his death.

He followed another maxim, as constantly as this: *viz.* that even the best of men is apt to neglect his duty, when he thinks himself firmly settled in the favour of his prince, or fears that he hath entirely lost it. Therefore, his ministers, generals, and even his brothers, could not avoid experiencing, now and then, some sudden changes in his behaviour.

A prince, who had offended Frederick, got presents from him. A minister of state,

state, engaged in a very disagreeable correspondence with the king, received a parcel, under the great cabinet seal, which contained, not his dismissal, as he had every reason to expect, but the ribbon and insignia of the order of the Black Eagle, with a letter from the monarch, kind to the highest degree. Frederick was constantly playing with the souls of men, suspended between hope and fear. Was it his intention to keep the mental powers of a minister in constant strain and action, he did not grant him what he well knew his soul was eagerly longing for. Frederick much respected his famous minister, Count Herzberg, who, during his reign, had brought about the most important treaties of peace;—yet this great man was never by him made a knight of the Black Eagle. Neither

ther did he bestow this mark of royal favour upon the high chancellor Carmer, though, otherwise, to his eminent merits he did complete justice. He feared that these great and useful men, when in full possession of all the honours, they had right to expect, on the approach of old age, might prefer the ease of peaceful retirement, to the toilsome bustle of public life.

His generosity was sometimes restrained by the same principle, and not by avarice, as was the opinion of many. The marquis d'Argens was one of those literati, whose company the king liked best, and who staid the longest time with him. No one was more troubled with *homesickness* than this philosopher; though, perhaps, only a fondness for shifting places.

places, might be at the bottom of this disease. D'Argens staid with Frederick seldom longer than eighteen months, and having been scarce a twelvemonth at home, longed again to return to Potsdam. His salary was no more than eighteen hundred dollars *per annum* — Being once informed that d'Argens's household rather betrayed poverty, — Frederick replied, “What would you
 “ have me do? If I give him an hundred Louis d'ors, he wants to go to
 “ France; and if two hundred, he thinks
 “ himself rich enough to leave me, and
 “ establish himself for ever in Provence*.”

Frederick

* “Comment voulez-vous, que je fasse? Si je
 “ lui donne cent Louis, il veut aller en France; et, si
 “ je lui en donne deux cent, il croit être assez riche,
 “ pour me quitter, et pour s'établir pour vie en Pro-
 “ vence!”

Frederick was always great in rewarding great services. Lieutenant General Pritwiz, commander of the regiment of Gens d'Armes, had distinguished himself, on many occasions, in the seven years war. When captain in the regiment of Ziethen, with an hundred hussars, he rescued the king from the hands of the Cossacks, in the disastrous battle near Cunnerdorf. Frederick was very fond of his conversation, and presented him with the great and considerable estate of Quiliz. General Lestewiz, who, in the battle of Torgau, the very moment that all seemed to be lost, made, with a small body of troops, the last and successful attack, got the important bailiwick of Friedland.

When

When in the battle of Cunnerfdorf, in a dreadful shower of grape-shot, Frederick's second horse was killed under him, General Goetz, then adjutant-general, alighted and gave him his; a short time before, a ball piercing the king's buttoned coat, crushed a gold tooth-pick case in his waistcoat pocket, and remained there. On account of his great military talents, this general was held in high esteem by his sovereign, and honoured with the most important trusts. In the last war, on the Bavarian succession, the Austrians had surprised Habelsworth, taken up the prince of Hesse-Philipssthal, with the greatest part of his regiment, and made themselves masters of the county of Glaz. The king ordered General Goetz to dislodge them, and this expedition was crowned with

with the completest success. After the peace, the large feudal estates, Sharfeneck and Tunshendorf, reverted to the crown. The king presented General Goetz with them, and told him, that he was extremely happy to find this opportunity of proving his gratitude.

These presents were worth, each, between one and two hundred thousand dollars. His favours in money were not less considerable. His minister in Silesia, Baron Slaberndorf, received from him an hundred thousand dollars, for having formed the chief magazine for the army, as big again as he was ordered to do. This extraordinary precaution enabled the king to hold so long the famous camp near Strehlen. Many years after, Frederick would often say: "Without
" the

“ the foresight of this gentleman, I
 “ should have been in danger of being
 “ starved to death with my whole ar-
 “ my*.” General Loffow, chief and
 commander of the regiment of black
 hussars, got a present of ninety-six thou-
 sand dollars from Frederick.

Even after the death of his heroes,
 he would often testify his grateful sense
 of their services. A general happened
 to die, whose integrity was as well known
 to the king as his important services.—
 This general had the direction of one of
 the most extensive branches of military
 expenditure. On his decease, a defi-
 ciency of eighty-four thousand dollars was
 found

* “ J’aurois risqué, de mourir de faim, moi et mon
 “ armée, sans la prevoyance de cet homme.”

found in his accounts, which were as complicate as immense. The general left, besides some estates, a large fortune, out of which Frederick was advised to indemnify himself. But he replied, "I know General ***; he was an honest man, and my friend; the deficiency in his accounts, I am sure, is not his fault, but that of some clerks employed under him. His children shall by no means be the sufferers for it. I'll sustain the loss, and forgive the whole sum." A short time after, his widow got a pension from the king.

The rewarding of services, however, was not the only aim of his presents, but also the encouragement of arts and manufactures in his country. Thus, about new-year's day, he complimented the

princesses with rich brocades and jewels, too dear for other buyers, which he purchased not from one but several manufacturers and jewellers, eminent in their trade.

By his behaviour towards the army, Frederick gave the strongest proof of his skill in leading and ruling mankind. It was for him a chief business to keep (as he expressed himself) each regiment in order. The colonels were obliged to answer for their regiments; and he called them to an account for every misdemeanor of the soldiers. He thought it of great consequence to him, thoroughly to know the capacity of every general, to keep the active in continual attention, and force the indolent to become active. He held the minds of men in continual agitation. Experience had taught

taught him, that as unrelenting severity damps every mental power and chills the soul, the perpetual sunshine of royal favour enervates and relaxes the mind, and makes it undesirous and unable to deserve distinction, by useful and generous efforts.

Therefore, officers of distinguished merit were seldom advanced at the time, they had reason to expect it. General Warnery, when lieutenant colonel, in the year 1756, prevented the Saxons from joining the Austrian army. The order *pour le Mérite*, and a royal kiss, were his reward; but he remained lieutenant colonel as before. The king sent him word by General Winterfeld, "that, if in the last war and this campaign he had been promoted on every occasion he had distinguished himself, he should

“ have been field-marshal long ago.”
 Warnery, at that time, dined constantly
 with Frederick, and was then one of his
 favourites.

He relates himself, in his posthumous
 works, *how by punishments and rewards
 he brought his cavalry to perfection.
 Fear and hope were the engines he con-
 stantly employed to regulate the conduct
 of the greatest and the meanest of his
 servants. We know how cheerfully,
 therefore, many of his heroes often would
 have thrown away their laurels, to live
 somewhere in peaceful obscurity; how,
 weary and tired out, sometimes they even
 left the army, and yet always returned to
 fight his battles and gain fresh laurels.

However, he did not begrudge praise
 and applause to such minds as he thought

* Oeuvres posthumes, Tom. II. pag. 197.

fit to be governed by them alone. Two of his letters to Baron Horst, which I have copied from the original of the king's own hand, show how he treated such men. The first, dated December 10, 1768, is written in German, and runs thus: " My
 " dear minister, Baron Horst; in drawing
 " up the new tarif for the treaty of com-
 " merce to be negociated with the court
 " of ***, you could never have better
 " answered my own ideas, than you have
 " done in your report of the seventh of
 " this month. I find this tarif so com-
 " plete, and the directions contained in
 " the adjoined memoir so well con-
 " trived, so solid and satisfactory, that,
 " without any addition or alteration, I
 " have sent both to Baron ***, my am-
 " bassador destined to that court, and di-
 " rected him strictly to adhere to them

“ in the course of his negociation. I
“ feel the toilsomeness of this laborious
“ work; and assure you, that my grati-
“ tude is fully equal to the pains you
“ have taken in completing it.

“ I am, your affectionate king,

“ FREDERICK.”

The other contains some encouraging motives, to procure him an information he earnestly desired. Whatever can rouse the zeal and flatter the ambition of a man, the main springs of whose soul are these passions, is said in this letter, written in French.

To the MINISTER of STATE,
BARON HORST.

“ I am sensible of the great difficulty
“ you will find, in penetrating into the
“ secret of the new invented cannon of

“ ***;

“ ***: but the more glorious will it be
 “ for you, if you find means to disclose
 “ it. I am confident, that the very dif-
 “ ficulty of the task is for you the most
 “ powerful incitement to achieve it, and
 “ to render me this service; which, you
 “ may be sure, I shall most gratefully
 “ acknowledge. Meanwhile, I thank you
 “ for your letters from Vienna and Ver-
 “ sailles, and pray God to hold you in
 “ his holy and worthy keeping.

“ *Potsdam, April 7th, 1783.*”*

H 4

How

* “ Au ministre d'état, Baron de Horst. Je sens
 “ bien, qu'il vous sera extrêmement difficile, de péné-
 “ trer le secret de la nouvelle invention des canons de
 “ ***; mais d'autant plus glorieux vous fera-t-il, si
 “ vous trouvez moyen de l'approfondir. Aussi suis-je
 “ persuadé, que ces difficultés même vous serviront
 “ d'aiguillon puissant à tenter l'impossible, pour me
 “ rendre ce service, & vous pouvez être assuré de ma
 “ reconnoissance. En attendant, je vous sçais gré de

“ vos

How Baron Horst returned these sentiments of his dear beloved king, appears from the following letter to Frederick, written in French, by Baron Horst, the 22d of January, 1775, on his resigning his department :

“ May it please your majesty, at the
 “ eve of my retirement, graciously to re-
 “ ceive the sincere expressions of grati-
 “ tude, and that respectful and unalter-
 “ able attachment, my heart is deeply
 “ impressed with. I have seen and weigh-
 “ ed your matchless reign, so faintly ex-
 “ ampled in former ages ; I have seen
 “ that monarch who devotes himself to
 “ the most painful and uninterrupted ex-
 “ ertions, and aggrandizes his state, for
 “ the

“ vos lettres de Vienne & de Versailles, & sur ce je
 “ prie Dieu, qu’il vous ait en sa sainte & digne garde.
 “ Pctsdam, ce 7 Aout, 1783.”

“ the sole purpose of making its great-
 “ ness the instrument of the highest prof-
 “ perity and happiness of his people ;
 “ that sovereign, who, though rapidly
 “ descending into the smallest minutiae,
 “ yet, to them never sacrifices the gran-
 “ deur of his plan ; who, knowing man-
 “ kind, opposes their illusions with un-
 “ shaken firmness, and never suffers long,
 “ probability to bear down truth ; who,
 “ with the most piercing eye, discovers
 “ the frailties of inferior minds, only to
 “ pardon them. Such a sovereign, Sire,
 “ if he is sure of being known, must feel
 “ that love and inviolable fidelity are the
 “ offerings which plain and simple reason
 “ cannot forbear to lay at his feet.

“ This is not a flatterer’s voice ; your
 “ majesty never charged me with this
 “ fault ; it is the speech of a man, who

" to himself wants to justify his own
 " feelings, and give an account of that
 " unchangeable devotion, with which he
 " thinks himself happy to be, Sire,"
 &c. *

Not

* " Votre majesté daignera permettre, qu'en tou-
 " chant au moment qui m'éloigne, je viens mettre à
 " vos pieds, le temoignage d'une reconnoissance &
 " d'un attachement, plein de vénération, que rien ne
 " sçauroit détruire.

" J'ai vu & j'ai osé apprécier ce règne unique, dont
 " les annales des siècles passés ne sçauroient apporter
 " que des exemples inférieurs ; un souverain, qui se
 " devoue au travail le plus pénible & le plus suivi, qui
 " crée la grandeur de son état, pour en faire l'instru-
 " ment du plus grand bien-être, qu'il est possible de
 " repandre sur un peuple ; qui d'un pas rapide de-
 " scendant jusqu'aux moindres details, ne leur sacrifie
 " jamais la grandeur de son plan ; qui connoissant les
 " hommes oppose la fermeté à leurs illusions, & ne
 " souffre point, que les probabilités l'emportent long-
 " temps sur le vrai ; qui d'un regard perçant ne de-
 " couvre la foiblesse des esprits subordonnés, que pour
 " les pardonner.

Not all great men suffer, like Frederick, the scrutinizing and explaining of the grounds of their proceedings, though ever so much blended with their praise.

Frederick's behaviour towards his brothers and sisters, was directed by the same principles, as his conduct with his servants and friends. For all philosophic by-standers, it was a feast of souls to see how he treated them,—how dearly he loved them during their life and after their death,—and how well he knew, by every mark of respect, to make amends

H 6

for

“ Un tel souverain, Sire, dès qu’il se voit connu,
 “ doit être persuadé que l’amour & une fidélité invio-
 “ lable sont le tribut, que la simple raison lui apporte
 “ de toute nécessité. Ceci n’est point la voix du flat-
 “ teur. Votre majesté ne m’accusa jamais de ce de-
 “ faut; mais c’est celle de l’homme, qui veut se rendre
 “ raison à lui même & justifier ce devouement éternel,
 “ avec lequel je me crois heureux d’être, Sire, &c.”

for his ill-humours. Eternal monuments prove, and unadorned records tell it posterity, how he valued the exalted genius and merits of his great brother, Prince Henry. The least shadow of disregard for such a man, he deemed a severe offence; therefore, he never neglected any opportunity, great or unimportant, of shewing him his respect. At dinner with this prince, he always arose from his chair when he drank his health.

Two days after the unfortunate battle near Hochkirchen, he was informed of the death of his dearly beloved sister, the Margravine of Barout. “Many days together,” says Mr. de Cat, in a very remarkable letter to Mr. de Lavaux, * “from three in the afternoon till seven at
“ night,

* Vie de Frederick, Tom. vi. pag. 379, 380.

“ night, he conversed with me about
 “ nothing but this sister. The shutters
 “ of his room were almost entirely shut;
 “ whole days he lived in this gloomy
 “ retreat. Since the moment this me-
 “ lancholy news reached him, he read in
 “ a low voice, contrary to his custom,
 “ nothing but Bossuet’s, Flechier’s, and
 “ Mascaron’s Funeral Sermons, and
 “ Young’s Night Thoughts, which he
 “ desired from me.”

C H A P. XXIV.

On the best Manner of contradicting him,

EVERY man can bear contradiction,
 if we but know and are disposed
 for that purpose, to behave with becom-
 ing

ing propriety. With kings we do not commonly want this disposition; but as their ways of thinking are very different, the ways of contradicting them must vary, of course. With Frederick they were, in some degree, the exact reverse of what might be expected.

Frederick would sometimes fly into the most violent passion, and make a face that frightened or struck dumb every one. But he likewise came round very soon, when the persons concerned kept their courage, composure, and presence of mind. Entirely master of himself, he was, on certain occasions, not;—however, he was so *sometimes*, even in the highest pitch of rage, and *always* in all his wars and battles, in every lucky and unlucky event of his life.

Mr.

Mr. Denina says: "It ought not to be denied, that Frederick did not like contradiction, or to hear of difficulties, when he had given out his orders*." This must be understood with some reserve: he certainly could not bear to be contradicted publicly, and in the presence of many people. This appeared to him like contempt, and who, without madness, would rouse such feelings in a man of his greatness? But no king was ever more ready to listen to truth. He most willingly received every kind of remonstrance, made *tête-à-tête*, and backed with sufficient reasons.

A reign or administration is altogether void of steadiness of character, if every representation against every measure

* *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II.*
page 417.

sure finds a willing ear. Did Frederick not directly feel the force of objections; were they, of course, either not well-grounded, or not perspicuous? He, most certainly, would reject them. But were the objectors in the right, and possessed of sufficient firmness, constancy and courage, they might, without the least danger, repeat their remonstrances, and place their objections in a stronger light.

This was often the case with Baron Horst: out of innumerable instances, I'll relate but one:—At the beginning of the tobacco-administration, Messrs. Shwarz, at Magdeburg, lost their manufactory, the most important, perhaps, in all the Prussian dominions. In similar cases, the manufacturers had always been indemnified; and, sometimes, even in a
 very

very generous manner. Messrs. Shwarz, alone, were denied this indemnification; and, moreover, calumniated and defamed with the king. Such things are, and happen daily at every court; but how that came to pass at Frederick's, will hardly be guessed. It happened thus: The minister, at the head of the stamp-office, to cloak a piece of miscalculation, which lay at his door, charged Messrs. Shwarz with not having done justice to their contract, that, from its very nature, by no means could be fulfilled.

When Baron Horst laid before the king his proposals for indemnifying Messrs. Shwarz, he gave him an absolute denial. Baron Horst repeated them four times, but was always refused, and, the fourth refusal, even accompanied with

with the exprefs order, not to trouble him any more with this affair. However, this minifter, nobly bold in the caufe of oppreffed innocence, made a fifth attempt, and appeared before Frederick, holding in his hand an expofition of the reasons, why the king was bound in juftice not to refuse Meftrs. Shwarz that indemnification which, in fimilar cafes, had been granted to other manufacturers. Frederick read this memoir; and, with the greateft benevolence and humanity, approved of all his propofals.

Mr. Denina, in the courfe of his work, does juftice to this great monarch, when he fays: “ The king’s orders, however, “ were not altogether irrevocable; he “ would fometimes listen to objections, “ provided they had neither the ap-

“ pear-

“pearance of advice, nor of a lecture*.”

At the same time he mentions an instance which proves that Frederick, even as poet, yielded to remonstrances, made in a becoming manner, and forbore publishing a poem, which, through his ambassador, he communicated to Count Panin, and this Russian minister did not wish to see printed. This compliance of the poet is even a stronger proof than that of the monarch (as the ingenious Denina feels full well) that, when Frederick persisted in his own will and determination, self-complacency and stubbornness were not the springs, that actuated his great soul.

After the instance I have given of the generous intrepidity of Baron Horst, I
may

* *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Frederick II.* page 419, 420.

may be allowed to say a word more about it. When the king had made him his minister of state, the duchess dowager of Brunswick said to him: "Your majesty has made a fine acquisition in Baron Horst." "Horst is a strange being," replied the king; "whenever I have given him a good scolding, he demands an audience from me*."

* C'est un homme bien singulier. Quand je lui ai lavé la tête, il me demande une audience."

CHAP.

C H A P. XXV.

On his Mildness and Lenity; his satirical turn of Mind; and its good and bad Consequences.

GREAT and good was Frederick, wherever greatness and goodness could appear. Somewhat mild and tender breathed through his frame, and was stamped on his mind. His very voice, highly soft and pleasing, bespoke the mildness of his soul, in moments of unruffled serenity and peace. But, sometimes, Jupiter's thunderbolts flashed likewise from his eyes: yet the storm would soon subside, and then, from the same eyes, smiled again the sweet calmness of the brightest evening sky.

The

The Spanish ambaffador to the court of Petersburg, Chevalier Normandez, a gentleman of great parts and distinguished abilities, converfing with me laft year, about the aftonifhing pliancy of Frederick's phyfiognomy and foul, told me the following instance of it: In his way from Petersburg to Versailles, he was once with Frederick in Sanffoucy. During his audience, an officer defired admittance. The king let him come in, —faid to Mr. Normandez, he might ftay, and went with the officer to a corner of the room. In a low voice the officer made his report; in a low voice Frederick answered him, but with a face as if he wanted to crush and annihilate heaven and earth. The officer withdrew, and the king immediately returned to Mr. Normandez, and gave him
some

some very important and interesting commissions for the French ministry, with a sweetness in mien and voice, that he knew not better how to describe, than with these words: “Il avoit l’air aussi
 “doux, qu’une fille de joye à Paris.”
 “His mien was as sweet, as that of a
 “Parisian lady of pleasure.”

Count Mirabeau says, in his famous letter to King Frederick William the Second: “Frederick seized the admission of mankind, but he never could
 “obtain their love.” This assertion seems harsh: but, in an excellent passage of his work, on the Prussian Monarchy, he has corrected or explained it in the most satisfactory manner. How sublime and affecting is this passage! “Frederick was very near the moment when
 “he should experience in himself the
 “bloody

“ bloody scene of Don Carlos, or the
 “ more recent one of Czàrowiz. He got
 “ his pardon : but beheaded before his
 “ eyes was his bosom friend and com-
 “ panion, the unfortunate Catt. ———
 “ He scarce perceived this devoted
 “ friend on the scaffold, when, in the
 “ most heart-rending accents of a soul,
 “ pressed down with overwhelming grief,
 “ he begged his pardon. During the
 “ execution he fainted away, thrilled
 “ with all the pangs of death. Before he
 “ had left nothing untried, to save his
 “ favourite. In a fit of despair he was
 “ ready to sacrifice the throne to his
 “ friend. But after blood thirsted
 “ the cruel monarch, who had signed
 “ his sentence of death ; and Catt ex-
 “ pired, not without the comfort of
 “ having seen the tears of his royal
 “ friend.

“ friend. Some irresistible feelings bear
 “ strongly upon us, to believe this tra-
 “ dition. Many fugitive anecdotes of
 “ Frederick’s life, have long ago con-
 “ vinced me, that born with a feeling
 “ heart, but apprehending how little
 “ a ruler and a king ought to indulge
 “ himself in sympathetic emotions, he
 “ subdued his natural bent to sympathy
 “ and mildness. No; an unfeeling
 “ mind had never Frederick’s look, his
 “ enchanting voice, his lively and plia-
 “ ble imagination. The harshness, with
 “ which weaker minds upbraid this
 “ great man, was, perhaps, the bright-
 “ est triumph of his exalted soul, over
 “ the mighty power of nature*.”

VOL. II.

I

Thus

* De la Monarchie Prussienne. Tom. 1. p. 90, 93.

Thus speaks Mirabeau, and who can hear him without rapture, when he speaks with such sensibility, eloquence and truth? It is a painful task to write against a man of feeling. Yet without declining this task imposed on me, by the love of truth and duty, I offer here to Count Mirabeau that tribute, which no feeling mind refuses to a sympathising heart.

Many people do not talk of Frederick as well and generously as Count Mirabeau here speaks of him. Censures and slanders, of all kind and description, have been circulated against his character, not only through Germany and France, but even in the very heart of the Prussian monarchy, the *highly illuminated* Berlin. No private man was ever more misrepresented and calumniated by his
most

most envenomed enemies, than Frederick the Great by his slanderers. But neither did his friends spare him, and many of them liked likewise to throw a stone at him. A good, but ill-formed man, in the innocence of his heart, and without any ill design, has charged Frederick with ingratitude; “for having, “after his accession to the crown, blamed “the conduct of those, who, contrary “to the will of his father, had alleviated his imprisonment at Custrin; “and, instead of being thankful for “their kindness, withdrawn from them “his confidence.” It is true, that Frederick, when king, disapproved his plan of escaping from his father, when prince royal: but it is a glaring falsehood, that he ever behaved in an ungrateful manner towards those who had endeavoured

to soften the hardships of his confinement. The only man at Custrin, in whose power it was to do this, was Mr. de Munchow, president of the chamber of Newmark. Directly after his accession, the two sons of this president were made counts, and, besides, one of them colonel and adjutant-general, and the other, a short time after, with all the authority and power of a viceroy, minister in Silesia.

In farther proof of his ingratitude, he is charged with having, when king, not paid the debts he had contracted, when prince royal. Frederick, it is true, did not discharge these debts immediately after his accession to the throne, to prevent the princes of his house from running in debt. He had this so much at heart, that a royal edict was enacted, denying

denying to every one, who lent money to a prince, an action to recover it. But all the debts he had contracted when prince royal were paid, except those which he knew to be gross impositions upon his want of experience and juvenile generosity.

It were an ignoble toil to fight my way through the host of accusations, which malice, envy, or dulness have mustered against Frederick the Great. The more pleasing and more glorious task be mine, to represent impeached greatness in its native purity and lustre, and by the weight of incontrovertible facts, simply told, to crush calumny and slander.

When Frederick's dying father, certainly no tender parent, in his last hours, had called him to his bed, a stream of tears was gushing from his eyes, as he

retired to his apartments. Tears, in such a situation, do they not prove more than those, which *we others* shed?

Whenever he was not obliged to act the *hero* and the *king*, he was so happy in being a *man*. Notwithstanding the almost super-human power of his mind, his private affections were always soft and gentle. His letters to Suhm, and those which, during the seven years war, he wrote to the old Countess Camas, breathe the sweetness of his soul. Even in music, pictures, and the colour of his furniture, he loved what was mild and pleasing. His taste for the grand and impressive productions, of the Italian schools, arose in his latter years; but he always disliked those *horrid beauties*, of which so many ladies are exceeding fond.

fond. "That's painted for hangmen," would Frederick say.

This royal hero, who in the battle of Torgau, with unruffled calmness, saw ten battalions of his grenadiers fall, before they had even discharged their guns, was, in his private life, compassionate, to an almost incredible degree. An eminent philosopher and good man, late Moses Mendelson, has told me, that once under his windows too feeble endeavours being made, to save a girl from drowning, Frederick the Great was seen, with all the symptoms of deepest anguish, wringing his hands and calling out for assistance. But how could he indulge humanity and gratify his loving kindness, when single he stood against two thirds of Europe in arms, threatening nothing less than his utter destruction?

truction? The dignity and honour of his house, the immortality of his name, his very political existence, he was forced to wrest from his enemies. Does a fore smitten lion gently tender us his paw?

At Mirabeau's saying that pure, undiluted greatness was never seen on a throne, and his reviling the many millions, since the seven years war, by Frederick distributed among his impoverished subjects, we do not wonder. But, when cold and heartless politicians presume to assert, that he gave them these millions, to take more in return, they utter a glaring absurdity. For Frederick, the father of his people, did certainly not throw all his money among his nobility, villages, towns, and provinces,

vinces, reduced to indigence by war, fire, and floods, for the purpose of placing it on good interest. Mr. de Launay has proved, in a irrefutable manner, that since the establishment of the *Régie*, the people in the Prussian dominions have paid an hundred millions less than they would have been obliged to pay without it, and, by no means, an hundred million more, as Count Mirabeau avers: For if the taxes on bread, beer, and other articles, had been collected and exacted without any mitigation, one hundred millions more must have flowed into the royal exchequer. Besides not paying this immense sum, the Prussian people have received forty millions from Frederick, and found numberless opportunities of improving their industry to

their own advantage, and the public welfare*.

Mr. de Launay has displayed Frederick's whole system of finance and political economy, with the noblest simplicity, and proved its excellence with dignity and vigour. Count Herzberg, in eternal monuments, relates of Frederick what hood-winked prejudice and vain-glorious presumption scorn to see.—Count Guibert, uniting in his immortal picture the sublimest touches of Frederick's character, amidst the former herd of slaves, at Versailles, has said, what ever ought to be said of such a king, with the same courage as Frederick performed it. All this, in my opinion,

rouses

* De la Haye de Launay's refutation of Count Mirabeau. page 102.

rouses and elevates the soul. Every where, in Frederick's conduct, we perceive true moral greatness, magnanimity, and the most exalted benevolence and love of mankind.

A benevolent heart, and all which it gives and yield,—do not deny it, man! affords the highest felicity on earth. Wit and humour, and every high-born mental power,—what are the enjoyments they produce, but frail and imperfect fruitions, if not blended with benevolence and kindness? No one felt this deeper than Frederick the Great. Therefore, unnumbered proofs of his divine benignity, recorded among the most exalted deeds of mankind, will stand the test of every age, and be immortal as his name.

No crowned head with such a soul as his, would be unwilling to do as much good as Frederick. But some crowned heads have more disposition than money for beneficent acts. What Frederick was able to perform on his throne, cannot be done on every other. Therefore sovereigns ought, more than other men, to guard against unbounded kindness. Human folly never strays farther than in her requests. Immense are her pretensions and her wishes, whenever it is known that monarchs are fond of giving and doing good. Frederick, therefore, sometimes would restrain his goodness. He knew how often sovereigns gain more through fear than love. All human minds are not susceptible of love, but fear is felt by every man under such a king. A minister, deceased long ago,
after

after having been in his service many years, often confessed, that though times without number, he had conversed with Frederick about business, and never received an unkind or ungracious look from that monarch, yet every day, on his door opening to him, he had been heart-struck with the thought: "Perhaps to-day I lose honour, place, and all human happiness."

Frederick, however, had long been the warmest friend of many a man, who rejoiced in his death. In monarchic governments no period is more interesting to him, who studies mankind, than the time, when one sun is sinking below the horizon, and the lustre of another begins to dawn. People of high rank in Berlin, who owed all to Frederick, during his last illness were
seen

seen pale and trembling, when they heard he had enjoyed a good night's rest, or when a dread struck them that their long bought mourning might be eaten by moths. How glowed and flamed my soul against these weather-cocks! Yet, at the same time, I saw in Potsdam instances of the most liberal conduct, in so delicate a situation. Should any man of honour, thus circumstanced, wish to ingratiate himself with the rising sun, the surest way is this: to devote all his exertions, all his zeal and love, to that monarch, who still wears the crown. But, on such occasions, a courtier's mind is the most likely to be out of tune. The continual fear, in one case, of being turned out, and in the other, of not coming in, makes him double-tongued and dull. Nobleness of soul, and steadiness

diness of mind, are not court manners, and the atmosphere of princes is always rather pestiferous.

Frederick was not fond of the professed courtier, but loved intelligent, active and honest men. Honesty was with him of the highest value. If any one, by his actions, foiled Frederick's good opinion of him, his displeasure burst forth like a hurricane. Unpremeditated offences and mistakes he bore with uncommon magnanimity and mildness. A striking proof of his lenity and truly royal self-command, in such cases, he gave after having finished his history of the seven years war. The rough copy of this work, which is now in every one's hands, lay in his room, quite complete, on a table, over which hung a chandelier.—Through the neglect of one of his pages,
this

this copy caught fire and was burnt to ashes. The page threw himself down before the king, and informed him of this misfortune. Frederick, receiving this unwelcome news, said nothing but these great and godly words: "Well, " I must write this history again." Sulzer communicated this anecdote to me; Luchefini testified its truth; and Frederick actually wrote that history again.

Rousseau highly magnifies Turenne, on account of the following anecdote: This great Frenchman, on a burning summer's-day, lay once in his night-cap and a short waistcoat, in a window of his anti-chamber. A scullion, who happened to pass by, supposing this half-dressed figure to be one of his colleagues, stole near him, and, with all his force, smacked his backside. Turenne, turning
ing

ing round, saw the poor fellow almost out of his senses, prostrated at his feet. "Ah! *Monseigneur*," cried he, "I thought you were George the scullion." Turenne, rubbing his bottom, exclaimed with much meekness and good nature; "Suppose I had been George the scullion, there was no occasion for such a devilish smack." This is a beautiful feature in the character of Turenne: but Frederick's calmness, on hearing the fate of the first copy of his history, is sublime.

His life abounds with proofs of his almost super-human power of subduing the highest indignation, and the most excruciating grief, some of which are known, and others buried in eternal obscurity and silence. In the seven years war,

war, he seldom shewed passion or resentment, when, through the misconduct of his generals, he lost fortresses and battles. The surprise near Hochkirchen greatly distressed him: it was imputed to the commanding general's having neglected to execute the king's orders. Frederick, with the greatest lenity, gave him this to understand: but it broke his heart, and he died soon after.

The first dreadful tidings, that, near Maxen, eleven thousand of his troops had laid down their arms, he did not bear with the same tranquillity. The adjutant-general charged with this Job's message, did not like to deliver it. The king's companion, Mr. Cat, undertook this business. When he entered Frederick's room, he was employed in parodying some verses from Solomon's Song and the Ecclesiastes.

He

He did not see Mr. Cat, and continued to write. When he had done, he perceived Cat, and this gentleman reported the disastrous event. The king started, sprung up from his chair, sighed, walked some time about his room, and was constantly expressing his astonishment and grief, that his troops had not rather chosen to be cut in pieces. "You can be of no use to me," said he to Cat, "leave me to my own meditations. I want some sudden resolution, and if I cannot repair my loss, I'll try, at least, to lessen it. I'll send for my brother Henry, and consult with him on this strange event*." Cat went, and Frederick took his flute. Prince Henry came.

* Vie de Frederick. Tom. vi, page 382 and 383.

came. Frederick took a walk with him through the camp, joking and laughing, and, this done, the whole army was ordered to arms. Field-marshal Daun, desirous to know how Frederick might behave after so great a disaster, marched his whole van-guard towards him, and found him in order of battle. A heavy canonade began on both sides. Daun, informed of what he wanted to know, returned to his camp.

General Fink, the commander of the corps, made prisoners near Maxen, was an officer of distinguished merit and valour. He, as well as prince Henry, had had some presentiment of that grievous misfortune, the consequences of which were not so bad for him, as he had reason to expect. The king, as General
Warnery

Warnery tells us,* no doubt, received him in a strange manner. He ordered to invite him to dinner; and, on his coming, measured him with long looks, without saying a word retired into his closet, sent him word that he was invited by a mere mistake, and soon after had him arrested and brought before a court martial. However, as Fink entered into the Danish service, Frederick congratulated him on this promotion, complimenting him, at the same time, on his great military talents.

General Zastrow was very kindly treated by Frederick. He commanded in Schweidniz, when, in the year 1761, on the break of day, the Austrians took that
 fortrefs,

* General Warnery's Works. Vol. viii. page 61 and 62.

fortress, in less than three hours. In strict justice, this general had forfeited his head; for had he acted with becoming prudence and circumspection, Laudon's plan against Schweidnitz could never have succeeded. However, to a long memoir, which Zastrow sent him to prove, that that important fortress was lost without any fault of his, Frederick gave this mild and laconic answer: "You may say, of course, with Francis the First, after the battle of Pavia: "All is lost but my honour*."

For a long while, he had a gentleman about him, who, during the war, had served him with as much spirit as success. But at Potsdam, as sometimes it comes to

* "Vous pouvez donc dire avec François I. "après la bataille de Pavie: Tout est perdu, hors "l'honneur."

to pass in this world of our's, avarice made him a courtier, and the hero shrunk into the mean reptile of a lecher. He spent a world of money with women; and used the basest tricks to get it. Supposed to be a great favourite with the king, and, of consequence, a mighty dangerous man; he took care to be well paid on the score of this supposition. He practised the most infamous frauds. Many an innocent man was flung down by him into an abyss of misery and sorrow, and once the king condemned him to restore thirty thousand dollars he had extorted from oppressed innocence.— From a kind of weakness, too frequent in the great world, and vicinity of thrones, the high chancellor Furst gave once a sentence in favour of this pretended favourite, that a long time after (in mil-
ler

ler Arnold's cause) in a dreadful manner operated against him. The king knew the whole life and all the proceedings of this courtier. According to his principles, he forbore branding with public infamy a man, who once had served with so much honour. Therefore, on some trifling occasion, he gave him a severe reprimand, without mentioning, however, any thing but the slight offence he had then committed. The courtier now entreated the king's leave of absence for some time; and soon after, to Frederick's great satisfaction, resigned his place.

In the common course of human events, kings certainly cannot avoid being often deceived. However, I cannot subscribe to these harsh expressions of Count Mirabeau: " Frederick's foolish fondness for doing

" every

“ every thing himself, caused him to be
 “ the most imposed sovereign in all Eu-
 “ rope. His madness, of transacting the
 “ whole business of his kingdom in one
 “ hour and an half, made every minister
 “ an absolute despot in his department.”*

On many occasions, a mean, stupid fel-
 low has a better chance to escape im-
 positions, than a great man. Great minds
 are always good, and good minds delight
 in acting *greatly*. Whoever is fond of
 doing good, will sometimes be deceived
 for want of minutely scrutinising the ob-
 ject of his benevolence. This is one of
 the reasons why benevolent kings by no
 means can avoid deceptions, and why
 Frederick, whose benevolence was blend-

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* Histoire secrete de la cour de Berlin. Tom. I.
 pag. 119.

ed with a fixed opinion, that but very few men are worthy of unreserved confidence, was neither so easily nor so often imposed upon as other princes.

Frederick, with the most penetrating eye, watched his ministers, controlled their conduct, often rejected their proposals, corrected their mistakes, or censured their faults, and with the closest attention examined every thing before him. To suppose that, under such a monarch, every minister was an absolute despot in his department, and that such a king was the most imposed on sovereign in Europe, is undoubtedly a thought nearly bordering on madness. Count Mirabeau gives Frederick the Great an hour and an half every day, for public business. But Baron Horst assured me, that he commonly spent this time
with

with his cabinet counsellors, and the remainder of the day was open for the perusal and examen of petitions, and for all kind of public affairs.

Count Mirabeau, in his judgments on Frederick the Great, proceeds, but in too many cases, on the mere ground of the chit-chat of shallow courtiers, grooms and scullions. Popular fables, without number, palmed upon him at Berlin, are but too often the *venerable* records, from which that great guardian-angel of the Prussian illuminators draws his light. He says, for instance : “ A cashier of General Wartenberg steals eighty thousand dollars. The general reports it to the king, and expects his orders. Frederick answers : He could and should by no means meddle in the business, but was determined not to lose the

K 2

“ money.

“ money. Wartenberg takes the hint,
 “ He calls together all the contractors,
 “ and tells them, that they must either
 “ make up this loss, or renounce for ever
 “ all hope of getting contracts. The
 “ contractors swear, cry, lament, and
 “ bring the money. Wartenberg informs
 “ the king, that the money is recovered.
 “ Frederiek writes him a severe letter,
 “ and concludes it with these words:
 “ This is the last time I ever shall par-
 “ don you.”*

This tale is not only a mere fiction, but
 a palpable impossibility. According to
 the established form of the Prussian go-
 vernment, every fortnight a strict inquiry
 is made into the amount of public money
 which ought to be in the hands of the
 officers

* Histoire secrete de la Cour de Berlin. Tom. II.
 p. 129 & 130.

officers accountable for it. All the ministers, presidents, and generals are answerable for the neglect of this inquiry, in their different departments. No cashier, of course, can embezzle more than a fortnight's receipt; and no cash-keeper of any Prussian regiment whatever, receives, even in a month's time, fifty thousand dollars. The truth is, that once a cashier run away with some thousand dollars, which his securities were obliged to refund.

However, I would not be understood to doubt, or call in question Frederick's having been deceived within his cabinet and without it. Had I any such intention, the infamous tricks played upon him by cabinet counsellor Galster, must refute me in an unanswerable manner. This perfidious rogue was detected by

Baron Horst, tried, found guilty, cashier-
 ed, and sent to Spandau. He had been
 there some time, when his brother wrote
 to Frederick the following letter: "I
 " am the brother of the unfortunate
 " Galster, on whose crimes your Majes-
 " ty is inflicting deserved punishment,
 " but to whom I owe rather more than
 " to my own father. I am curate of
 " Altenplaten, a small village in the
 " principality of Magdeburg. I have
 " seven living children, whom I am un-
 " able to support from my pittance, but
 " my brother, in his prosperous days,
 " richly provided for. I now might
 " have an opportunity of proving my
 " grateful mind to him. He is old,
 " poor, afflicted with disease and con-
 " finement, and God has blessed me with
 " a small fortune. May it please your
 " Majesty

“ Majesty to give me up this wretched
 “ man, that I may have him in my house,
 “ and cherish him with a brother’s care.”

Frederick, deeply moved by this letter,
 returned the curate the following answer:

“ I grant you the wished for release
 “ of your brother, and him (as you tell
 “ me he is poor) a pension of five hun-
 “ dred dollars a year. But he must
 “ never leave you or your parish, and
 “ never write to me or carry on a foreign
 “ correspondence, otherwise imprison-
 “ ment for life is his inevitable fate.”

Officers of the royal army were like-
 wise sometimes guilty of misdemeanors
 hardly to be credited. Mr. la Vilette,
 a Frenchman, and major in the Prussian
 corps of engineers, was of this kind. He
 undertook for the French ministry to
 draw plans of all the Prussian fortresses,

and to send them to Versailles. Two hundred and fifty louis d'ors were paid him for that of Magdeburg, and less in proportion for the others. But as this traitor could not possibly send so many plans, as they wanted, he betook himself to fancy's aid, and embellished truth with fables. He invented for the French court, plans of Prussian fortifications that never existed, fortified the most wretched boroughs, scarce surrounded with walls, in the most exquisite manner, sent these plans to Versailles, and got, at least, fifty louis d'ors for each of them. The plot transpired, and the clever engineer was, (not privately hanged, as some would suppose, but) gently expelled the country.

Dreadful is the story of Counsellor Ferber, beheaded in Spandau, some time ago,

ago. Ferber, son to a burgomaster of Dantzic, was formerly Prussian agent in that town, and lived afterwards at Berlin, where his acquaintance, as numerous as talkative, informed him of whatever happened at court. He subsisted by an *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin*, which he sold to foreign courts. The more scandalous anecdotes he could relate of Frederick, the greater he hoped would be his reward. But as all this would not do to satisfy his rapacity, that ingenious fellow hit upon a plan, equally infamous and absurd. The poisoning of Frederick and the whole royal family he meant to propose to courts, that would have rejected it with the deepest indignation. On his trial he confessed his crime, and received sentence of death. Frederick gave a pension to his widow, and took

the utmost care of his only daughter. When of age, she had a fortune of sixteen thousand dollars, and, agreeably to the king's advice, married a young man, to whom he gave a very profitable place in the country.

A Frenchman, or perhaps a disguised German, has said somewhere: "When Frederick's interest is hurt, he does not punish, but he takes revenge."*— This is the most impudent falsehood. Never was his interest more hurt, than by a man I have mentioned before, and he forgave him.

All these instances of the sweetness of Frederick's temper, of his goodness, and lenity, are worthy of being transmitted to the latest posterity. At hearing or reading

* Frederick le Grand, pag. II.

reading them, every sensible mind must
 be kindled and burn with love for him;—
 and, however, they have said, “ This
 “ polite and even timorous king,—this
 “ great *reverence-maker*, did not hesitate a
 “ moment to immolate victims at his
 “ table. Ladies he would ask how their
 “ bastards did. And with Princes who
 “ had scarcely ever seen the discharge
 “ of a gun, speak of their victories.—
 “ There is a kind of cowardice in sneer-
 “ ing down people, who neither can nor
 “ dare make an answer.”*

K 6 An

“ * Ce roi poli, timide même, grand faiseur de re-
 “ verences, ne se fit aucun scrupule, d’immoler à sa
 “ table des victimes. Il a demandé à des femmes des
 “ nouvelles de leurs batards, a parlé de leurs victoires
 “ à des princes, qui n’avoient jamais vû tirer un coup
 “ de fusil. Il y a une espèce de lâcheté à accabler
 “ ceux, qui ne peuvent, ni ne doivent répondre,
 “ Frederick le Grand, pag. 188 & 189.

An impartial writer ought not to dis-
 own, that at table Frederick sometimes
 would indulge himself in harsh and of-
 fensive jests. He looked upon this time as
 a kind of saturnals, where every one might
 freely speak his mind, and for this rea-
 son he never was displeased with the most
 vigorous defence of the party attacked
 by him. But the charge of an improper
 conduct with ladies he never was guilty
 of. It was only in the company of the
 queen and the princesses of his house, that
 he dined with ladies, and then nothing
 but the most decent and refined language
 was heard at his table. Equally ground-
 less and undeserved is the censure, that
 with princes, who never had smelt pow-
 der, he talked of their victories. Never
 bragging of his own exploits, he hardly
 ever touched on military transactions,
 but

but conversing either with his own generals and officers, or with foreign military gentlemen of such eminent parts and abilities, as Count Guibert and Prince de Ligne. No one but a Frenchman, or a German of the basest kind, could advance such falsehoods against Frederick, and even upbraid him with timorousness in his conversation. Should this airy scribbler ever have had an opportunity of conversing with this great monarch, to be sure he has not found in him that arrogance, with which so many a sorry Frenchman would talk to this royal hero.

The silly creatures supposed witticism to be the only means of winning him to their interest. But they most egregiously mistook him. Whoever dared to approach Frederick with quibbles,

bles, and other such mean attempts at wit, might be sure, either with a severe reprimand to be sent about his business, or to see him turn his back without any answer at all. One evening he said to the marquis Luchefini: "To-day a French officer was presented to me. I asked, '*De quel régiment êtes vous ?*' He answered: '*Sire ! du régiment de Roussillon, autrement nommé Trousse-Cotillon.*' '*Votre serviteur,*' quoth I, left the fop, and quitted the room."

Of his dignity Frederick would abate nothing, even in matters of mere etiquette. Two chamberlains of the pope once solicited an audience, through general Lentulus. The king granted the audience and fixed the hour; but Lentulus, having either mistaken the monarch, or wishing to out-do him in politeness,

liteneſs, added, the king's will to be, that the two chamberlains ſhould be fetched in his own equipage. Many a foreigner, it is true, was honoured with royal equipage, but this conſiſted in a carriage rather worſe than a hackney-coach, and two royal nags that would ſtumble and plunge, almoſt at every ſtep, in the ſands about Potsdam. Yet, even ſuch an equipage, was, in this caſe, beyond Frederick's intention. The king's ſervant, however, miſtook General Lentulus, as well as he Frederick. One of the moſt elegant and pompous royal carriages, drawn by ſix glorious ſteeds, was ſent to fetch the ambaffadors of his holineſs, who, in this ſtately pomp, arrived at the palace of Potsdam. The king happened to be at the window, when the triumphant Italians made their
appear-

appearance. "Who is that?" asked the monarch:—"The two ambassadors of the pope!" Much nettled by this blunder, he ordered immediately to withdraw the royal carriage, and to send for a common hackney coach in its place.—When the audience was over, the two chamberlains, petrified at the sight of a paltry hackney, instead of a magnificent royal equipage, asked one of the king's servants the reason of this inexplicable change. He told them it was an old etiquette at the Prussian court, to convey Papal ambassadors in the most splendid equipage to an audience, and to take them home in an hackney-coach. At table, he would scarce ever suppress any witty or sarcastic flight, and always season his tales with comic power and attic salt. Baron Edelfheim, his
ambas-

ambassador, at Versailles, Vienna, and Hanover, told me that, once in his presence, having touched upon the strong predilection of the physical tribe for close air in sick rooms, in former times, he closed his remarks with a story, which I should certainly forbear relating, did it not end in Latin: "The emperor Leopold, very ill with a fever, was hermetically shut up in his chamber, and every beam of light carefully prevented from peeping into the room. One morning his first physician, who conducted this sheepish management of the imperial patient, happened to enter the room. For a long while he could not find the bed: at last he chanced to hit upon it, but now again was under the greatest pains, where and how to get at the emperor's arm,

" to

“ to feel his pulse. With great con-
 “ cern he was tapping the counterpane,
 “ the bed, and the emperor, who rather
 “ being of a surly temper, would, at
 “ that time, not be spoken to. At last
 “ he exulted in having caught hold of
 “ Leopold’s arm, applied his two fore-
 “ fingers to the artery, and with the
 “ closest attention began to count. But
 “ the emperor, highly astonished at the
 “ gross and shameful mistake, with great
 “ dignity set the stupid physician right,
 “ saying to this Esculape, in a low and
 “ pathetic voice: *Hoc est membrum nos-*
 “ *trum imperiale Sacro-Cæsareum.*”

As long as he digested well, Freder-
 rick was always gay and happy at table.
 All his cares, it seemed, he left behind
 him in his closet, was pleased with every
 thing, and highly entertaining. But, as

he

he liked to be a long time at table, all his generals, sometimes would fall asleep. Baron Bulow, lieutenant-general of foot, being once in this case, cried out, in a dreadful voice: "March! March! Forwards!" "There's a brave fellow," said the king, "even in his dreams he minds his profession."

Though Frederick often gave a free course to his sarcastic turn of mind, without considering that sarcasms wound deeper, when darted by a king, he was never angry when they were returned with dexterity and skill.

Much displeased with a wind-mill that stands near the Orangery of Sanssouci, he offered it's possessor three other wind-mills, besides a considerable sum in cash, if he would transfer his wind-mill to the king. But the miller answered

fwered plain and boldly: "My wind-
 " mill has supported me and my chil-
 " dren many years, and affords me a fine
 " prospect; therefore, I'll live and die
 " in my mill." This answer silenced
 Frederick the Great, and the miller was
 never troubled again for his mill. Some
 time after, walking with one of his fa-
 vourites, through the garden of Sanf-
 souci, he said, looking at this mill:
 "'Tis very disagreeable, however, that
 " this fellow don't choose to sell me his
 " nasty mill." "Why," replied the
 favourite, (knowing his excessive fond-
 nefs for gilding,) "your majesty should
 " have it gilded." Frederick answered
 not a word to this lampoon: but he
 laughed heartily, as once saying to an
 architect, (a Dutchman) "Sir, you are
 " an afs." This afs replied, "That
 " must

" must I be, to bear and carry all that
 " your majesty is pleased to load me
 " with."

Mr. de la Touche, French ambassador at Berlin, knew that this great and beautiful town includes some meadows and tillage-ground. Therefore, on Frederick's observing once, that comparing the plans of the two towns, he thought Berlin almost as big as Paris, he said: " Yes, Sire, but in Paris they do not
 " reap and mow*."

Baron Munchausen, his minister for the ecclesiastical department, joined to the most extensive learning and the keenest penetration, an inflexible love of truth and justice. Frederick knew him full well; yet, notwithstanding, suspected
 once,

* " Oui, Sire ; mais on n'y fait pas la moisson."

once, that, biaſſed by pietiſm, he declined the filling up of a vacant abbot's place at Cloſterbergen, near Magdeburg. This ſuſpicion was altogether groundleſs and unjuſt, the miniſter being a gentleman of enlightened piety, and, by no means, an enthuſiaſt. Frederick, however, on the ſcore of this ſuſpicion, at table, teased and haraſſed him with his uſual ſarcaſms; and, at laſt, ſaid to him: "Pray, Baron Munchauſen, are you a "Quaker?" "No, Sire;" replied the highly offended and enraged miniſter, "but I am a nobleman." This brisk reply ſilenced Frederick, and the matter was entirely dropt.

Equally bold, oſtimes, were the answers of a gentleman of another deſcription, Colonel Quintus Icilius, whom I have introduced to my readers in the

fixth

xth chapter of this book. Once, at
 able, scoffing at free battalions, in
 very harsh expressions, Frederick told
 him plainly, that they all consisted of
 thieves. Quintus insisting upon the
 king's making good this charge against
 him and his battalion; "Why," said
 Frederick, "did you not steal pretty
 briskly in Huberzburg?" "To be
 sure," replied the Colonel; "but
 there I stole for the interest of my
 most gracious employer, getting for
 myself scarce so much as my fees*."

Of as good, but finer a cast, were Bas-
 tiani's replies. The king having once
 tortured him long enough on account of
 his popery, at last said to him: "Sup-
 pose,

* "Oui, Sire, mais je n'ai volé, que pour les in-
 térêts de mon gracieux commettant, et à peine en ai-
 je retiré mes droits de commission."

“ pose, Bastiani, you were the pope, and
 “ the petty marquis of Brandenbourg
 “ approached your throne, to kiss your
 “ pantofle, how would you receive me ?”
 “ With all due respect,” replied Basti-
 ani ; “ I should arise, advance towards
 “ your Majesty, and deliver this humble
 “ petition : Almighty eagle ! cover me
 “ with thy wings, but forbear striking
 “ me with thy beak*.” This incom-
 parable answer operated highly in Bas-
 tiani’s favour. The king never teased
 him any more, but always treated him
 with the greatest kindness.

The lampoons he sometimes would
 launch against the empresses Mary The-
 resa and Elizabeth, Madame de Pompa-
 dour,

* “ Aigle tout-puissant ! Couvres moi de tes
 “ ailes, mais épargnes moi tes coups de bec.”

dour, Cardinal Bernis, and the famous Saxon minister, Count Bruhl, produced dreadful consequences. Bernis, 'tis true, he only ridiculed a little on account of his poetry; a poet's revenge, however, is more savage than a minister's.

Very strange and prominent in the annals of his reign, is the history of his famous letter to the king of Sardinia, so highly offensive to all the monarchs of Europe. This sovereign was then old and rather superstitious. That noble heroism which, in better years, had covered him with laurels and glory, was no more. Frederick, however, held this old monarch in high esteem; and his letter to him, operated upon the king of Spain with a power which never any satire had before.

In this letter, Frederick, with great jollity, runs over the transactions of the age; with few exceptions speaks very ill of all the present rulers of the world, and at last bursts out in these words:—

“ Had I not had the honour to be a
 “ cōtemporary of your Majesty, I should
 “ even blush in the other world, to have
 “ been a king in our days.” This was
 certainly an effusion of the bitterest
 spleen. But there was no such thing as
 the King of Sardinia’s keeping back so
 high a compliment. Therefore, it was
 given out in Turin, the King of Prus-
 sia had written to the King of Sardinia a
 letter, disclosing political sentiments and
 events of the last importance, and, espe-
 cially, greatly interesting for the Bour-
 bon courts. In a moment, all the gen-
 tlemen of the diplomatic corps were on
 the

the wing to get copies of this letter.—
They were easily obtained, and flew
straightway to Versailles and Madrid.

Lewis the Fifteenth laughed at the
letter. “I had never the ambition,”
said he, “of being a great king*.” But
Charles III. King of Spain, very angry
with the letter-writer, treated the letter
in a manner that does him immortal
honour. Having assembled all his privy
counsellors, he asked, if it be true that
this King of Prussia, by achievements,
inimitable in other countries, had de-
served the praise of being the greatest
monarch in Europe, in a manner, that
no other sovereign might presume to vie
with him?

L2

“The

* “Je n’ai jamais eu l’ambition, d’être un grand
“roi.”

“ The King of Prussia,” answered the
 Dons, “ has given encouragement to
 “ agriculture and husbandry, establish-
 “ ed great manufactories, dug canals to
 “ support navigation, and drained vast
 “ marshy tracts in his country. He
 “ has disciplined his army, and advanc-
 “ ed his troops to a high degree of per-
 “ fection. Moreover, he has endea-
 “ voured to rectify the laws, and regu-
 “ late the administration of justice in
 “ his dominions.”

Now a spirit of emulation began to
 stir within Charles the Third. For
 every corner of Spain laws were enacted,
 to improve agriculture and increase po-
 pulation. The works in Sierra Morena
 were carried on with double vigour.
 A large manufactory for printing calico
 and linen was established in Barcelona ;
 and

and the famous canal of Murcia began. The improvement of the land troops and marines was undertaken with the warmest zeal; but the forming of a formidable fleet was Charles's chief aim, as he thought this the easiest way to out-do Frederick, who had no navy at all. At the same time a junto was appointed to correct the laws, and reform the proceedings of the courts of justice.

A great and illustrious personage, who told me this story, and gave me leave to make use of it, however, without naming him, added these just remarks: "On this passage of Frederick's life, a medal should be coined with the motto, *Ridendo stimulat reges.*"

C H A P. XXVI.

On his Unconcern with Respect to Misconceptions of his Conduct, and Slanders or Libels spread against him; On his Disposition to act right and greatly, and, yet make People believe that he was acting wrong.

FREDERICK was, by no means, unconcerned about posterity's opinion of him, which no sovereign can possibly be, who has any value for his own honour, and the welfare of his realm; but, with the utmost indifference, he scorned the opinion, calumnies and libels, of ill-designing or ill-informed men.

The liberty, or even licentiousness of censuring this great monarch, went, no
 CHAP. I. where,

where, greater lengths than at Potsdam. Gentlemen, who had lived many years in this place, and daily conversed with Frederick, assured me, that it was an amusement for young officers, to speak ill of him; that he knew this, without ever taking notice of it, but once in his life, when he gave these gentlemen to understand: “ Though it were, by no
 “ means, his intention to deprive them
 “ of that favourite amusement, yet,
 “ they might forbear enjoying it in
 “ coffee-houses, taverns, and other public
 “ places, lest he should be obliged to
 “ punish their indiscretion, for the mere
 “ sake of good police and decorum. In
 “ private company every officer was
 “ welcome to pour out his wit, any way
 “ he pleased.”

L 4

During

During my stay at Berlin, in 1771, I often said: "Nowhere, I am sure, is Frederick the Great so ill talked of as in Berlin." I rejoiced, however, in being witness of such frankness and uncommon courage. I found a thousand times more freedom in Berlin, than in Switzerland, and, particularly, in Berne. People of every rank and description were at liberty to talk whatever they pleased, and had never an hair hurt for doing so.

The inmost sentiments of Frederick's soul on those, who pretend to enlighten the public, through the medium of slander, are forcibly expressed in his posthumous works*. Envy, in his opinion, is the eternal source of satirical writings,

* *Oeuvres posthumes de Frederick II.* pag. 212.

writings, and to dogs barking at the moon, he compares those wretches, who, for the mere gratification of their malice, blacken the reputation of others, stoop to the grossest impositions, defame in every direction, and, with hue and cry, publish their lies.

Meanwhile some such dogs are still barking against him; let us learn from some incontrovertible facts, how consistent with the theory of the royal writer, was the practice of the king.

A well-known Prussian general, lately deceased, towards the close of the seven years war, wrote a critick on Frederick's campaigns. His remarks were not mild and temperate, but, often, very bitter. Some Austrian hussars took his baggage, which, two days after, was retaken by the Prussians. All the trunks, however,

L 5

were

were emptied, and nothing was left but some papers, and among them these critical observations on Frederick's conduct during the war. All these papers were sent to the king, who found the critick on himself highly interesting. He perused it, added with his own hand some marginal notes, explained some circumstances, which the author could not know; acknowledged the truth of such of his remarks as were just and well-grounded, and sometimes refuted him in as harsh expressions, as he had used himself. On one passage, for instance, he wrote: "Here the writer judges

"like a pot*." When he had done with his glosses, he sent the manuscript to its author, (who was then a colonel, but

had

* "Ici l'auteur juge comme une cruche."

had no regiment) with this note; "My
 "hussars have retaken from the enemy
 "some baggage, among which are
 "found papers belonging to you, which,
 "herewith, I return." We may easily
 conceive how the colonel felt, on re-
 ceiving his critick on Frederick the Great;
 reviewed by himself, and how he feared,
 he had criticised away all prospects of
 future promotion. However, a short
 time after the peace, Frederick gave
 him a regiment, even before it came to
 his turn. He made him a general, and
 afterwards, as he knew him to be an of-
 ficer of capacity and application, in-
 spector of the army.

A great Prussian general, distinguished
 as well for his eminent talents, as his
 wonderful exploits, said to me: "In the
 seven years war I have defended Frede-

“rick’s character against the whole
 “army. They were all against him.—
 “They reviled whatever he did, and
 “though forced, sometimes, to ac-
 “knowledge the greatness of his mind,
 “yet they constantly denied the good-
 “ness of his heart. During the whole
 “war, there was a kind of *opposition* in
 “the Prussian army. The gentlemen
 “of this party kept up a regular cor-
 “respondence, and censured and tra-
 “duced all his plans and actions. The
 “king knew all this; mentioned with
 “the mildest forbearance, the leading
 “men of this opposition; had, now and
 “then, their letters intercepted, and
 “laughed heartily at them. The Eng-
 “lish ambassador, Mr. Mitchel, said,
 “therefore, once to me: ‘Your army
 “is an army of Jacobites; yet you fight,
 “like

“ like devils, for a king, whom you incessantly criticise*.”

My compatriot, the ingenious and gallant Major General Warnery, thought I, must needs have been a member of this opposition, for he relates an anecdote concerning Frederick, and his wounded soldiers, that must thrill every sensible mind with compassion and horror. In his history of the campaign of 1760, he says: “ The greatest part of the soldiers, wounded near Torgau, perished with cold. This was the common fate in the Prussian army, whose hospitals were so ill managed, and so filled with foul air, that every soldier, on entering it, thought himself a dead corpse.”

* “ Votre armée est une armée de Jacobites ; mais vous vous battez comme des diables pour un roi, que vous ne cessez de critiquer.”

" corpse. We must not wonder at seeing
 " in the Prussian dominions, so few mu-
 " tilated people, after so cruel a war.
 " For I know it from indubitable au-
 " thority, that all the inspectors of the
 " hospitals, as well as all the surgeons,
 " were ordered to let all their patients
 " perish, who were wounded in such a
 " manner, that, after their recovery,
 " they could serve no longer, to save
 " the trouble and expence of support-
 " ing their existence*."

A more heinous charge was, perhaps,
 never brought against Frederick, except
 by one, who, in a delirious fit, would
 say: " Every feature in Frederick's
 " face, bespoke hatred of mankind:
 " murder sat on his forehead; self-in-
 terest,

* General Warnery's Works. Vol. VIII. p. 141.

" tereft, envy, peevifhnefs, and ill-hu-
 " mour reigned about his nofe; death
 " and deftruction flafhed from his wild,
 " fparkling eyes; and his fmile was the
 " sneering of hell on a fallen faint."*

The falfehood of the above atrocious
 charge, is proved by Meflrs. Baldinger,
 Theden and Horn, who, during the
 feven years war, as phyficians and fur-
 geons, ferved in the Pruffian army. M.
 Theden, a furgeon general of great pro-
 bity and merit, fays: " Near fifty-two
 " years I have ferved under Frederick
 " the Great, and know full well that
 " General Warnery's reflection does not
 " contain even a fhadow of truth. I
 " know

* Dictionary of all the blunders and puffs to be
 found in the pretended pofthumous works of Frede-
 rick the Second, publifhed at Berlin in fifteen volumes.
 Vienna, 1789. Pag. 161.

“ know what vast sums he spent with
 “ pleasure, that all possible care might
 “ be taken of his sick and wounded
 “ soldiers. That this was not always
 “ done, especially in the first moment
 “ after battles fought, cannot be denied;
 “ but this was no fault of his. The
 “ chief cause was the want of a proper
 “ regulation, now supplied by the bene-
 “ volent Frederick William the Second,
 “ and gratefully acknowledged by all
 “ those who were sick and wounded in
 “ the Dutch war.”*

Pamphlets and letters, full of libellous
 matter against himself, he often received,
 and laughed at them with unfeigned
 contempt. Soon after the establishment
 of the French *régio*, he received a letter
 by

* Anecdotes of Frederick II. No. 2. p 336.

by the post, beginning thus: "Is it you,
 " Sire, or Turcoret that reigns?"*—
 Laughing, he shewed this letter to the
 French regisseur, M. de Launay, and
 said to him: "This man seems very
 " angry indeed; but he knows neither
 " the local circumstances, nor the rea-
 " sons that have determined my choice
 " of the new regulations. Take, how-
 " ever, care, Sir, not to cause any legal
 " complaint. You are informed of my
 " intentions, and you know, that by no
 " means I aim at any increase of the
 " excise revenue, but only at the en-
 " couragement of manufactures and na-
 " tional industry."† A short time after,
 by

* "Est ce bien vous, Sire, or Turcoret, qui
 " règne?"

† "Cet homme paroît bien fâché. Mais il ne con-
 " noît ni la localité, ni les raisons, qui ont fait donner
 " le

by his command, the well-known French comedy, called *Turcoret*, was represented in Potsdam, and all the French *regisseurs* were among the spectators.

The calumnious letters on the partition of Poland, and the pretended dialogue between the dividing powers, were sent to him by the post. He told it himself to his evening companions, and laughed at these libels. But, as some chamberlain at table assured him that they were written with great elegance and truth, he replied: "Is it your place, count, to tell me that?" This count, a very smart and caustic genius, was afterwards treated rather with coolness,

"les nouvelles ordonnances. Gardez-vous, Monsieur, de donner lieu à des plaintes fondées. Vous savez mes intentions, qui ne tendent point à augmenter la recette des accises, mais à favoriser les fabriques & l'industrie nationale."

ness, scarcely ever invited to the King's table ; and, ere long, at his desire, dismissed from his service.

La Beaumelle, in his quarrel with Voltaire, indulged himself in every means of hurting his adversary. My readers know from the fifth chapter of this work, that he adulterated the *Pucelle d'Orleans*, and foisted into it a passage, fully qualified highly to enrage Frederick against Voltaire, and utterly to destroy his interest with him. The copy of this corrupted edition he sent to Mr. *Bordeaux*, printer and bookseller to the king, as if it came from Voltaire himself. *Bordeaux* was a man of known integrity, and much in favour with Frederick. La Beaumelle, in all likelihood, supposed that *Bordeaux* would show this copy to the king, and be prohibited
from

from printing it, as Voltaire's ruin was all he wanted. Bourdeaux actually carried the copy to Frederick, and told him, " That though it were not his
 " most distant wish to print such horrid
 " scurrilities, yet he thought himself
 " obliged to show him this work. Had
 " he printed it he might have cleared
 " ten thousand dollars, which would be
 " the certain profit of every publisher
 " of this book." The king read the manuscript, and gave Bourdeaux leave to print it, which accordingly was done.

Libellers of the lower kind he took as little notice of, as of vulgar wittlings and dealers in epigrams. Every one in Potsdam knows, that a few years before his death, seeing a great crowd assemble under his windows, ~~and~~ eagerly look up to the palace, he asked one of his servants,

vants, "What was the matter?" Informed by him that a libel on his Majesty was stuck up at the palace, but so high that it hardly could be read from below, he ordered it to be taken down and placed again in such a manner, that people might be able to read it, without distorting their necks.

All Europe has seen the *Mémoires pour servir à la vie de Monsieur de Voltaire, écrits par lui même*, which were published in the year 1784. Very likely something found among the papers of Voltaire, and composed by him, soon after his banishment from Potsdam, on account of his quarrel with Maupertuis, may be the groundwork of these memoirs. But the whole composition being neither more nor less than a rhapsody of mangled stories, disfigured truths, gross fictions, and glaring
 absur-

absurdities, cannot possibly be the production of a genius like Voltaire's; and, least of all, that which relates to the seven years war and the succeeding time. For it is generally understood, that then Voltaire had made his peace with Frederick, received favours from him, and never spoke of this great monarch but with the highest admiration and respect.

This libel was not unknown to Frederick. Baron Horst, who, about the time of its publication, returned from France to Potsdam, told him of its being condemned and prohibited by Lewis XVI., adding, "that though he perfectly knew his sovereign contempt of all such low scurrilities, yet he was astonished to see it publicly sold in Berlin, in French and German, which, in his opinion, should not be done."

"No,"

“No,” replied Frederick, “let this
“foolish thing have its course; it may,
“at least, amuse some country curates
“who do not like me.”*

Another libel on Frederick, *les mati-
nées du Roi de Prussie*, was likewise pub-
licly sold in Berlin, and spread every-
where. This pasquinade, which, with
unheard of stupidity, an Austrian *illumi-
nator* quotes as being Frederick’s own
composition,* was the work of a French
seer; who, mistaking his shallow observa-
tions on the Prussian government, for a
profound knowledge of all its secrets,
set

* “Non, il faut laisser courir cette sottise. Du
“moins elle servira d’amusement aux curés campag-
“nards, qui ne m’aiment pas.”

* The sheepish author of the Dictionary, &c. cited
before, pag. 75.

set up as an instructor of a king of Prussia in the art of governing his people.

Here another anecdote, vouched by the most respectable authority, deserves a place. Baron ***, at Dusseldorp, afterwards privy cabinet secretary to the Elector Palatine, informed a Prussian minister, "that it was in his power to suppress a very scandalous writing against the king; but the author expected two thousand louis d'ors for giving up his manuscript, upon oath that he had kept no copy." The minister immediately answered him: "The king, his master, would most certainly not give a halfpenny for such a composition; but its author might very easily obtain leave to have it printed and sold in the Prussian dominions, if otherwise he be a good man; and,

“and, as the baron declared, by mere
 “misfortune brought so low, as to be
 “forced to gain a livelihood by such
 “writings.”

Frederick's contempt of libels and
 slanders, published against him, cannot
 be wondered at, as even men of common
 understanding may possess this quality.
 But very singular and noble was his way
 of acting right and greatly, at the same
 time that he made people believe he
 acted wrong. Few men, indeed, appre-
 hend this feature in his character, too
 sublime and exalted for the many. Such
 sentiments and feelings we find only in
 men steady to an uncommon degree, and
rooted in themselves: therefore we rever-
 ence them in hovels and on thrones.

Not without astonishment I saw in the
 production of an old, venerable gentle-

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M

man,

man, the following passage: "Frederick
 " has read, before the Royal Society at
 " Berlin, an eulogium on General Still,
 " whom, however, in some respect, he
 " had killed himself, by darting, on a
 " review, the following words against
 " him: To study alone will not do;
 " 'tis necessary also to keep the regiment
 " in order."* The venerable author
 adds, "General Still was a good christ-
 " tian, and this exposed him to Frede-
 " rick's lampoons, which he should have
 " despised."

General Still, in my humble opinion,
 might be a good christian, and yet keep
 his regiment in order. He was much
 respected by the king, on account of his
 moral character and his knowledge: but
 his regiment was so utterly neglected,
 that,

* *Scrivenirs d'un citoyen.* Tom. II. pag. 267.

that, after his decease, Colonel Croseck, one of the ablest officers of cavalry in the Prussian service, wanted some years to raise this regiment to some kind of equality with the other troops; therefore the king might well be angry with General Still, and his reproving this neglect on a review, wants certainly no excuse.

Frederick's chiding and even dismissing an officer, in the sight of the whole army, for a trifling offence, was sometimes a mere act of mercy. In such cases, the offender was guilty of misdemeanors that deserved a severer punishment, and, if published, would have justified the king, but too much dishonoured the transgressor. If, for instance, a commander of horse had embezzled part of the forage, (which is a heavy crime in the Prussian service) he would

lay hold of a trifling mistake in the manual exercise, and dismiss him. Then the whole army, and all the world besides, pitied the poor sufferer, and exclaimed against his cruelty. But he would rather be thought cruel and wrong, than blast with infamy the officers and commanders of his troops. His great mind, against many an undeserved reproach, took sanctuary in itself, and scorned any vindication of his conduct, that he could not attempt without exposing others to ignominy and shame.

Several passages in his posthumous works, printed at Berlin, stir up in their readers questions of such a nature, as I shall not permit myself to utter. I am confident, however, that these passages, if read at all by the ingenious editor of Frederick's works, slip his attention:

at

at least, the royal author could never have intended them for the press.

C H A P. XXVII.

On some less noticed Features in Frederick's Character, and various mean and erroneous Opinions of him.

SOME general remarks on Frederick, some prominent features of his life and character, could not find a convenient place in the preceding chapters. I shall collect them here, and on the whole course of his wonderful life cast some glances, with integrity and truth. Flattery was obliged very cunningly to devise her mask, if she wanted to approach this matchless king, and now in awful silence she passes by his grave.

With deep-felt indignation, I saw one of his *character-daubers* represent him fond of flattery. With such people as he liked, he sometimes, it is true, would overlook flattering expressions, but requite others, with whom fawning and wheedling was a kind of trade, with cruel sarcasms.

In his latter years, he was once walking in the garden of Sanssoucy with one of his courtiers he liked much. This courtier was Count Schwerin, lately deceased, general and master of the horse to the king. With a deal of good nature, but rather too often, Schwerin said to Frederick: "Your Majesty walks so fast, that by no means I can keep pace with you." For some time he took no notice of this compliment, because, in all likelihood, he would not spoil him the pleasure of saying something pleasing

ing to him. But, at last, he could bear no longer this oft repeated flattery; for the master of the horse, very stout and valiant to his old age, walked much better than the king. Frederick, therefore, called two of his chairmen, and ordered them to bring a chair for the count. Schwerin, by his command, took his seat in it; the king walked at its side, and thus they safely arrived in Sanssoucy.

Julius Cæsar was highly admired by Frederick, and his bust, an antique, bought at Rome for eighteen thousand scudi, the only one in his closet, he regarded with all the fondness of a lover for that of his mistress. "Do you

"know," said he, the first warrior of his age, to prince de Ligne, "who

"has taught me the little I know of

"the art of war? Old field-marshal
 "Traun; that was a man!"* This field-
 marshal commanded under prince Charles
 of Lorrain, the army that, in the year
 1744, forced Frederick to quit Bohemia.
 Thus he worshipped military excellence
 wherever he found it; and though his
 exalted genius, deeply interwoven with
 his frame, sprung forth, as it were, from
 his very organization, he did not blush
 to own an instructor.

Between him and the great Schwerin,
 who so nobly fell near Prague, for some
 time subsisted a coolness, which seemed
 rather inconsistent with his character.
 But this coolness originated in a fit of
 vanity, which overcame that eminent
 hero,

* Mémoire sur le roi de Prusse, Frederick le
 Grand, par M. le prince de Ligne. Berlin, 1789.
 pag. 10.

hero, and hurt the feelings of the young, aspiring king. Undoubtedly it was Schwerin, who won the day near Molwitz. That this might be generally known through the army commanded by Frederick, Schwerin, before the king's re-joining the victorious troops, gave out the parole, "Jesus Christ!" which informed every officer that Frederick was absent.

Gustavus Adolphus, Condé, Marlborough, and Eugene, formed eminent warriors; but none of them greater generals than Frederick did. His master-works, no doubt, are Prince Ferdinand and the Duke of Brunswick, of whom posterity can say, "They are men like Cæsar, Turenne, and Frederick."

The almost magic power with which he inspired his troops, and so often ex-

alted a common man into a hero, is truly astonishing. In the latter part of the seven years war, his officers and soldiers could by no means be what they were at its beginning. The greatest part of his veterans were slain or prisoners. In the year 1757, the Prussian army, from an hundred and twenty thousand men dwindled down to forty thousand; and in the year 1759, he lost full two-thirds of his troops.* His recruits were children, deserters, and vagabonds. He transformed them into soldiers, and performed the same wonders as before. The universal enthusiasm, with which his name electrified all Europe, his enemies, and his friends, effected what nothing else could have done. It made his

* General Warnery's works, vol. vii. p. 213, and vol. viii. p. 64.

his troops, at the very close of a disastrous battle, long for another fight, and changed the most ferocious of his foes, the Russian officers and soldiers, into mild and generous enemies.* Like a destroying angel, his glory marched before his troops, and under his banners children thought of nothing but victory or death.

“ It cannot be doubted,” says M. Denina, “ that it was Frederick’s ambition
 “ to reign uninfluenced by any other
 “ mortal. His nearest relations, even
 “ the queen dowager, his mother, whom
 “ he highly respected, had no interest
 “ with him. He never made use of the
 “ expression, *d’après l’avis de notre conseil*,
 “ advised by our council; and we might
 “ say, that he was even jealous of allow-

M 6

“ ing

* General Warnery’s works, vol. viii. p. 23.

“ ing God a share in his power ; for he
 “ banished from his title the words :
 “ By the grace of god !”*

That the interest of the princes and princesses of his house had no weight with him, is certainly no blemish of his reign. Whoever is desirous to know the tendency and result of such recommendations, if listened to by sovereigns, may recall to his mind the secret history of the late court of Versailles, and recollect how all the springs of the former government of France, turned upon the interest of all the princes and princesses, of all the chambermaids and valets, of all the milliners and hair-dressers in Versailles. Yet M. Denina did, perhaps, not mean to censure Frederick's reign,
 for

* Essai sur la vie & le règne de Frederick II.
 p. 412.

for not having been influenced by such interest. His remark on the omission of the words: By the grace of god! is, however, very strange. In edicts, and all royal publications of this kind, these words were constantly inserted in the title; but, by his command, left out any where else, as well as the pedantic inscription, “Most illustrious and most “gracious king and lord.” In his letters, speaking of himself, he likewise substituted the singular personal pronoun to the plural, which every petty *serenissimus* makes use of in his *most gracious* missives. All this proves the philosophic cast of his mind, and nothing but this. That he had no objection against God’s influence over his reign, and was not jealous of the interference of the power divine, shews his manner of closing all his

his French letters with these words:
 “ I pray to God that he may hold you
 “ in his holy and worthy keeping.” I
 am not ignorant of this phrase being no-
 thing but a final compliment usual with
 sovereigns, but I think it, in point of
 sense, fully equivalent to that: By the
 grace of god!

Professor Weguelin, at Berlin, a pro-
 found thinker, and very honest man, said
 to me, in 1771: “Our military academy
 “ is one of the king’s master-pieces.
 “ The instruction he gave us is the best
 “ of his works: But if once Frederick
 “ has created a machine, he thinks he
 “ imitates god in never touching it any
 “ more.” With respect to the military
 academy at Berlin, my worthy compa-
 triot, this ingenious Swiss, for aught I
 know, may be right. Respecting many
 things,

things, Frederick was, certainly, not fond of innovations. He constantly adhered to his fundamental principles, and never altered the ground-work of all his undertakings. This originated in the firmness of his mind, and the steadiness of his character. His whole army was dressed in the year 1786, as in 1740; and the livery of his servants was of the very same cut, at the time of his accession and his death. Concerning other points, however, he thought some changes and modifications necessary, from time to time. "The best laws," said he, once to Baron Horst, "are not unalterably good. At certain periods, they ought to be revised and modified conformably to the continual changes in the manners of nations, their way of living, their wealth and all human concerns."

“cerns. Carefully to watch these different changes, is the indispensable duty of every well-meaning sovereign.”

Frederick's mind was as active, as firm and unshaken. In the whole course of his life it never ceased to act, but on the seventeenth of August, One thousand seven hundred and eighty-six, at two o'clock in the morning.

During the seven years war, he had constantly about him a dose of pills of sublimite, determined not to survive the loss of his crown, and the destruction of his country. “Suicide,” he often said to Baron Horst, “is an heroic remedy against unbearable misfortune, to the use of which, nature has intitled every man in such a calamitous case.”—Consistent with this opinion, he prohibited,

bited, any way, to disgrace the memory of self-murderers in his country ; and, if in the seven years war, his all had been lost, he would have taken his pills, and died like Cato.

His inclination, most assuredly, led him more to be a philosopher, than a soldier. Had he been born a private gentleman or nobleman, of his own accord, he had never entered the service. For his great and aspiring soul, averse to all kind of subjection and constraint, panted for nothing but liberty. Therefore, a great and ingenious Prussian general might well assure me, that Frederick would never have served up to a major's rank.

To be a royal warrior, however, is vastly different from being a private gentleman and serving in the army. As
King

King, Frederick was a warrior with all the uncontrolled power of his mind; he ought to be so to preserve his state. After the death of the Emperor, Charles the Sixth, the Austrian monarchy seemed to be on the verge of a total dissolution. Austria, Bavaria and Saxony, might become powers, each of whom could be equal, if not superior to him. Therefore, to keep the balance even, he took Silesia, to put it in his scale. This, and not the attainment of a great name, was the motive of his first war. He was thoroughly persuaded, that the political consequence of the Prussian monarchy could not be obtained, without keeping up a warlike spirit in the whole nation, and, especially, among the nobility of his country. Therefore, though in the course of a philosophic

con-

conversation, in his evening-parties, he did not object against assigning to war its proper place, next to pestilence and earthquake, he could not bear to hear the military profession slighted, and talked of in a disregardful manner.

Count Bork, a Pomeranian nobleman of eminent talents, and the most liberal mind, was major in a Prussian regiment of cavalry, when Frederick called him to Potsdam, to be governor of the prince-royal. Once, at dinner with Frederick, the count happened to fall foul upon the military profession, and to say: "It was
 " a pity that princes should be forced to
 " study the art military, the chief aim
 " of which was, to the utmost to dis-
 " tress mankind." "What!" replied Frederick, "you are governor and in-
 " structor of a prince of Prussia; you
 " are

“are a soldier yourself, and utter such
 “assertions against the military profes-
 “sion. You are unworthy of your place,
 “and, herewith, dismissed.” This hap-
 pened in the year 1764. The count left
 the court, and retired to his estate in
 Pomerania. Very few people knew the
 reason of his banishment, I have just re-
 lated. Bork was one of the noblest and
 most generous patriots. He lost more
 than an hundred thousand dollars by
 plunder and devastation, in the seven
 years war, and yet never complained.
 For this reason, a short time after his
 disgrace, Frederick gave him a pension,
 treated him always very kindly, and ne-
 ver failed to see him, when he reviewed
 his troops in Pomerania.

“Frederick,” says Count Guibert,
 the famous author of an excellent pane-
 gyrick

gyrick on this great king, “ did not
 “ avail himself of the new light, which,
 “ in our days, is thrown upon the art
 “ of government, and, in this respect,
 “ he was, undoubtedly, behind his age.”
 Guibert, this generous, bold, eloquent,
 and, otherwise, so candid judge of the
 great Frederick, has, here, certainly
 committed a grievous sin against his
 hero, and, therefore, (begging his par-
 don) I shall gently correct him for this
 offence.

Frederick was king almost half a cen-
 tury : he was a prince of uncommon ta-
 lents ; his reign was glorious ; he left
 his dominions in the most flourishing
 state, and, therefore, we may well sup-
 pose that he knew more of the art of go-
 vernment, than Count Guibert. Between
 this art sublime, and tactical knowledge,
 there

there lies as vast a distance, as between the arts of commanding a fleet and working a mine. Suppose, now, a Cornish miner, very clever in his art, ventured to say: "In the art of commanding a fleet, Admiral Rodney is, most assuredly, behind his age; for on the 12th of April, 1782, he did not avail himself of the new light, which, in our days, is thrown upon this art." Could we possibly refrain from asking: How came it to pass that this gentleman in his mine saw that light, which flit the great commander on the main?

Some one has said: "Would Frederick's subjects not have been more happy, if he had made no verses, and written no books?" I answer: "No."

To his powerful mind, poetry and composition were no business, but mere
diver-

diversions. Far from slackening his powers, they unbent them, and increased their elasticity and force for the cabinet and field. Amidst the greatest dangers of the seven years war, his fondness for literary composition, was the main spring of his almost super-human vigour, and the sweetest soother of his cares. Endowed with a soul of fire, and a heart open to all humane feelings, he ruled them and all his passions with a sway, unknown to less powerful minds. He conquered and carried all before him, by the native power of his soul, constantly applied to meditation and study. The muses followed him like the heroes of ancient Rome and Greece, in his camp and on all his marches. He made verses, when the enemy stood before him, and, sometimes, on the eve of
a de-

a decisive battle. Thus, keeping alive his softer feelings, by the constant play of his talents, he diverted his mind from scenes of horror, to pleasing and exalting objects; the harassed hero gained an happy hour, and from despondency and depression arose to insuperable force and greatness. In his deepest distress, Frederick composed the most admired of his poems.

Prussian ministers have often said to me: " We know, by experience, that
 " with many courts and people it was
 " almost a professed study to debase and
 " impair Frederick's greatness. This,
 " commonly, was done with the most
 " ridiculous ignorance of our constitution, and of the spirit of all his regulations. At eleven miles distance
 " from the Prussian frontiers, they spoke
 " of

“ of the kingdom of Prussia, as of the
“ kingdom of Siam.”

Barbarians, in their way, sometimes, misunderstood Frederick less than his civilized neighbours. The captain-general of the Mainots, by the history of the seven years war, that fell in his hands, was so much taken with this monarch, that, by a letter, written to him, he requested his joining and assisting him for the conquering of the Morea. This letter of the captain-general was the more remarkable, as he displayed in it an uncommon knowledge of the art of war. He endeavoured to convince the king, that twenty thousand Prussian troops were able to conquer and maintain all the Grecian islands, against the whole Ottoman force. He explained, in a very ingenious manner, how, for that purpose,

pose, they must avail themselves of the mountainous country, and the many narrow passes; adding, how the ancient Greeks had turned them to advantage. Frederick, however, did not think proper to conquer the Morea.

Hyder Aly, in the year 1779, sent an ambassador to Frederick the Great, charged with presents, and followed by a retinue of more than thirty persons;—he set out on his journey to Europe by the way of Bassora and Alexandria. At Bassora he and his suite were seized with the plague. Six and twenty of his retinue were carried off by the pest; and the surviving gentlemen of the embassy, supposing the ambassador likewise past recovery, found it convenient to divide among them, all the presents destined for Frederick; and to brush off, leaving nothing

nothing behind, but the credentials of the ambassador, and his papers. He recovered, however, and had courage enough, assisted by the French consul, to proceed on his journey, well knowing that, at Berlin, not the value of presents, but the importance of his message, would recommend him to notice and favour.— Arrived there, he proved his misadventure at Bassora, with certificates of all the European consuls residing there, and of many Arabian cheicks. His message consisted in the following proposals :

“ Hyder Aly offers to resign to the
 “ great King of Prussia, a sea-port in the
 “ neighbourhood of Goa, and to insure
 “ him the exclusive trade on his coasts.
 “ For these advantages he expects no-
 “ thing, but a number of non-commis-
 “ sioned Prussian officers, and as many

“gunsmiths as he can get. All these
 “men shall be well paid, and French
 “bankers become securities for their
 “payment and safety.”

This ambassador was a man of very good sense. He knew Europe and India exceedingly well. Some took him for an Englishman, for his knowledge of the English language. In all likelihood he was an English Jew. He understood Latin, spoke French with great propriety, and German pretty well. Hyder Aly's letter, and the ambassador's credentials, were written in the Persian tongue, the court-language of that Asiatic warrior. Frederick gave him to understand, in a very civil answer, “that he
 “was very sorry for not being able to ac-
 “cept of his kind and advantageous
 “offer, as he had neither any commercial

“con-

“ connexion with India, nor a fleet.” This answer was written in Latin. Though this embassy, and the letters of the captain-general of the Mainots and Hyder Aly deposited in the royal archives at Berlin, prove the high regard of those barbarians for Frederick the Great; yet a still higher esteem of his talents and exploits was entertained by the king of Candia, in the island of Ceylon. For this monarch, as is recorded by Mr. Eschelscroon, in his excellent account of a tour through India, thought Frederick the Second, King of Prussia, so great and eminent a warrior, that he said: “ I’ll offer him the commission of commander in chief of my troops.”

Frederick, even by barbarians, in their way, so highly respected; a monarch, so great, so mild, and so forbearing, an hero,
so

so exalted and so humane, was, however, most egregiously misunderstood by many European courts, princes and statesmen, even by so many of his own subjects. What was the reason of this strange misunderstanding? His greatness!



F I N I S.

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